

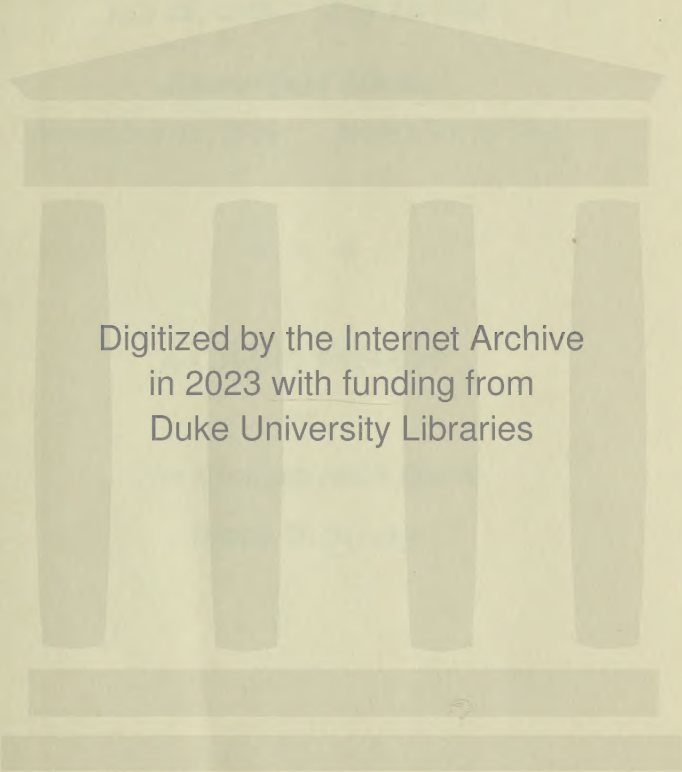
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IN MEMORIAM

MAY GRAY SEPARK

July 26, 1878 July 31, 1940

JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

November 11, 1908 November 9, 1940

+ + +

A LOVING TRIBUTE

BY

THE HUSBAND AND FATHER

JOSEPH H. SEPARK

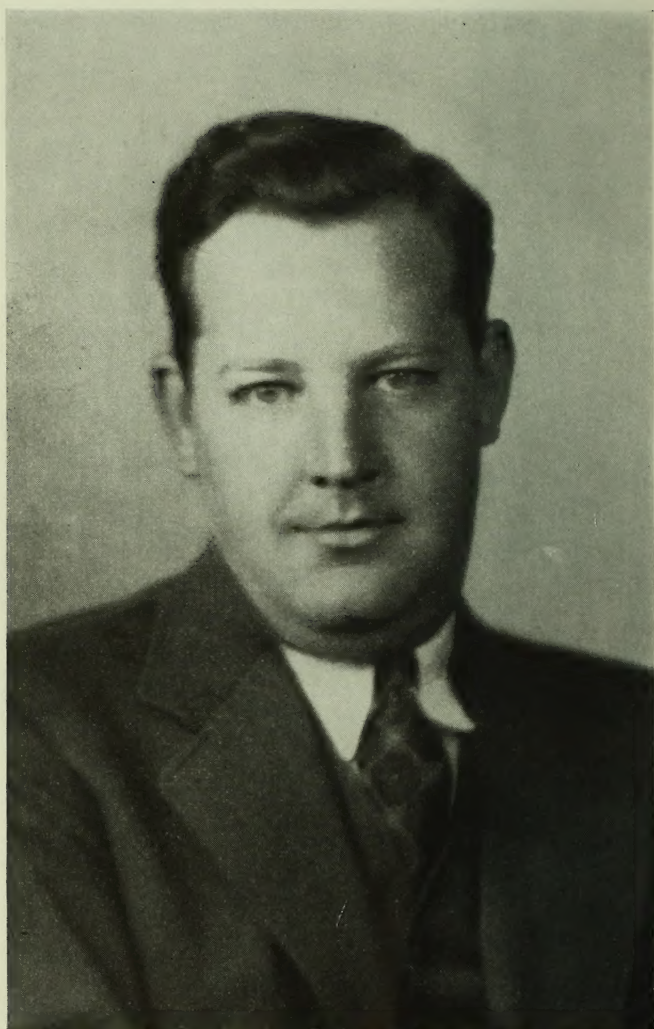
Privately Published

GASTONIA, N. C.

1942



MRS. MAY GRAY SEPARK
Her last picture. Taken in the spring of 1940.



JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

His last picture. Taken in October, 1940, at the age of 32.

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Foreword

December 14, 1940.

Because she meant so much to me and to our beloved son, Joe, to her devoted sisters and brothers and to a host of loving friends, I decided to prepare this memorial volume to the blessed memory of May Gray Separk, devoted wife and mother, and in the kingdom of His concern, one of God's noble women.

Not that I can conceive that those who have so deeply suffered through her passing need printed word to keep alive her memory, not that I can think that anyone of the inner circle of her love will, through the years, fail to keep faith with that love, but for the benefit of those who in the years to come still remember and still cherish her memory, I feel that I should put in printed form some of the activities of her busy and fruitful life, and some of the tributes paid her in life and in the days following her passing.

In this labor of love I had leaned much upon the strong and willing mind and spirit of our devoted son, Joe. The caption of this volume was to be: "To the Memory of May Gray Separk, Our Devoted Wife and Mother." But alas, that caption must now be changed. Death has again invaded my home and stripped it bare through the accidental death of our beloved son. Just in the prime of life he was taken from me, just when I most needed him and when I felt that he most needed me. But the purity of his heart, the unselfishness of his nature, and the nobility of his character will, through the years, be to me an ever present and precious memory.

I alone am left, but for their sakes I shall in no wise falter. Through God's grace and sustaining power I am resolved to keep my rendezvous with fidelity to the memory of my devoted wife and my devoted son.

The new caption of this volume will be: "To the Memory of May Gray Separk, Devoted Wife and Mother, and To the Memory of Joseph Gray Separk, Devoted Son."

If in that which is to follow in this volume I may seem to be effusive in my praise and evaluation of the life and character of wife and son, I can only hope that those who read may consider that it is I who knew them best and that it is I who am best qualified to appraise the life, spirit, and soul of each of the two who were of the very warp and woof of my life.

JOSEPH H. SEPARK.

MAY GRAY SEPARK

Mrs. J. H. Separk Passes Suddenly

Death came with shocking suddenness shortly before midnight last night to Mrs. May Gray Separk, one of the city's leaders in civic, social and religious affairs. She was ill only a few moments and death came before a physician could be summoned.

Mr. and Mrs. Separk had just returned home from a local picture show and had partaken of some light refreshments when she became suddenly ill. She passed unexpectedly while her husband was at the telephone attempting to call a physician.

Mrs. Separk had been slightly ill a few days ago and remained in bed for several days. However, she had apparently recovered and was to all appearances in normal health when the end came.

Funeral services will be held Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock at Main Street Methodist Church, of which she was an active and devoted member throughout all her adult life. The pastor, Reverend Excell Rozzelle, will conduct the services. Interment will follow in the Gray family plot in Oakwood cemetery.

Pallbearers will be C. W. Gunter, S. N. Boyce, J. W. Atkins, Charles E. Hamilton, A. J. Kirby, C. W. Boshamer, and Gregg Cherry, all of Gastonia, and R. A. Mayer of Charlotte.

Born at Lowell, July 26, 1878, Mrs. Separk had spent practically all of her life in Gastonia. She was the daughter of the late George A. Gray, one of Gaston County's pioneer textile manufacturers, and Jennie Withers Gray. Her father died in 1912 and her mother in 1923. The family moved to Gastonia when she was quite young, Mr. Gray being associated with Gastonia's first textile plant, the old Gastonia Manufacturing Company's mill.

In early life Mrs. Separk joined Main Street Methodist Church and had been very active in its service until her death. For many years she headed the Woman's organization of that church, in which capacity she guided its activities in a masterful way with the result that great things were accomplished.

Soon after the turn of the century the Gastonia Woman's Betterment Association was formed. She was one of the prime movers in that organization. It later grew into the Gastonia Woman's Club in which she continued active, having served for several years as its president. She was former president of the County Federation of Women's Clubs. She was a loyal and active member of the Gastonia Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy. During the World War she entered wholeheartedly into the Red Cross and other wartime activities. Hardly a civic movement in recent years failed to command her sympathy and support.

To all of these activities Mrs. Separk brought not only a wholehearted and sympathetic attitude, but along with that attitude a willingness to throw herself physically, mentally and spiritually into the accomplishment of the objects in view. She had a rare gift of common sense which enabled her to see through knotty problems and drive straight towards a solution. Along with that she had a rare sense of humor which enabled her to meet life's serious problems and situations in a manner that made their solution far easier and surer than would otherwise have been the case. Members of her family and close personal friends leaned heavily on her and came to her for advice when their own judgments failed to point a way to safe conclusions. In times of prosperity as well as in times of adversity she met life with a rare philosophy that often drove away fears and pessimism. She lived her life largely for others, and many will miss her cheery smile and words of comfort and encouragement.

Mrs. Separk attended local schools and received her higher education at the old Asheville Female College at

Asheville and at Randolph-Macon College at Lynchburg, Virginia.

Surviving are her husband, Joseph H. Separk, for many years a leader in the cotton and textile industries here; one son, Joseph Gray Separk; and the following brothers and sisters, namely: J. Lander Gray, Mrs. Ethel Gray Barkley, George A. Gray, Sr., Charles D. Gray, Sr., Mrs. Blanche Gray Hamner and Mrs. Myrtle Gray Legare, all of Gastonia, and Mrs. Maude Gray Efird, of Charlotte.

Mrs. Barkley was in Washington at the time of her sister's death and Mr. and Mrs. Hamner were on a tour of New England. It is expected that they will reach home before the time of the funeral.

From the *Gastonia Daily Gazette*, July 31, 1940

The Funeral Service

By the Pastor, THE REVEREND C. EXCELL ROZZELLE

ORGAN PROCESSIONAL

The Choir Sang: "*Abide With Me.*"

"Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou, who changest not, abide with me!

"I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me!

"I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

"Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes:
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

SCRIPTURE READING

"Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

"The righteous live for ever, and the care of them is with the Most High: with His right hand He shall cover them, and with His arm shall He shield them.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me;

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil;

My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations;

Before the mountains were brought forth,

Or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world,

Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

For a thousand years in Thy sight

Are but as yesterday when it is past,

And as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep:

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In
the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
So teach us to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants,
And Thy glory unto their children.
And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us:
And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. I am the way, the truth, and the life. If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Because I live, ye shall live also.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

"It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

"And he showed me a river of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

PRAYER

"Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life; since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of Thy holy will: not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding today. Consecrate with Thy presence the way our feet may go; and the humblest work will shine, and the roughest places be made plain. Lift us above unrighteous anger and mistrust into faith and hope and love by a simple and steadfast reliance on Thy sure will. In all things draw us to the mind of Christ, that Thy lost image may be traced again, and that Thou mayest own us at one with Him and Thee.

Amen."

"O God, who art the strength of Thy saints and who redeemest the souls of Thy servants; we bless Thy Name for all those who have died in the Lord, and who now rest from their labors, having received the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Especially we call to remembrance Thy loving-kindness and Thy tender mercies to this Thy servant. For all Thy goodness that withheld not his portion in the joys of this earthly life, and for Thy guiding hand along the way of his pilgrimage, we give Thee thanks and praise. Especially we bless Thee for Thy grace that kindled in her heart the love of Thy dear Name; that enabled her to fight the good fight, to endure unto the end, and to obtain the victory; yea, to become more than conquerer, through Him that loveth us. We magnify Thy holy Name that trials and temptations being ended, sickness and death being passed, with all the dangers and difficulties of this mortal life, her spirit is at home in Thy presence, at whose right hand dwelleth eternal peace. And grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that we who rejoice in the triumph of Thy saints may profit by their example, that, becoming followers of their faith and patience, we also may enter with them into an inheritance incorruptible and unde-

filed, and that fadeth not away; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The Choir sang: "*Sunset and Evening Star*"

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
For, though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Amen."

THE PASTOR'S TRIBUTE

In the quietness of midnight's solemn hour Eternity's call came to this charming woman, wife and mother. While the stars shone silently overhead and our city lay in its solitude of rest the summons came and the call was answered by one of Heaven's noblest servants—"God's elect lady" as the divine John described one of her kind in his tiny letter so long ago. The merciful finger of the good Father softly—oh, so softly—touched the tired heart of May Gray Separk and her earthly life came to an end, a life so long, so full, so well rounded, so generous, so tolerant, so freighted with beauty, fitly proportioned in each detail. When the word went forth that she had died, tears, ah tears so spontaneous, came rushing from our eyes, and all of us felt so frail in the grasp of Life's inevitabilities. But when we paused

to think and our minds had come again into their deepening thought we exclaimed, "God in this death has opened again the doors of the life eternal and has come rushing into our midst in the form of a holy miracle to show us once more the brightest way of entering the mansions yonder, ah those mansions ever prepared and ready." God also gave to us in this majestic event a sudden and recaptured memory of this one who lived and labored and loved for more than three score fruitful years in home and city life, for husband and son and neighbors without number. Ah, how we now remember her good deeds and the gentle energies of her ever kindly heart. Besides, you and I and all those who knew her are bound together in a deeper and lovelier brotherhood, comradeship of sorrow, our very souls knit by a common grief, friends now and always because our tears unite their waters in the everflowing current of life's ongoing purpose. In this event so seemingly hard to understand, God is revealing His face to you and to me, and is giving us a glimpse of His compassionate and kindly face, at the same time reaching out His hand to all, a hand of helpful love. This death should be an evangel flaming with the banners day by day. The passing of this noble creature from time is God's manner of lifting human life from the earthly and the carnal into the realms of the incorruptible, and by it we are given a finer hope and more dependable confidence in the high destiny of all Christian believers.

Mrs. Separk was known to all of you as a busy, hard working, dynamic personality, radiant in her temperament, letting her light shine forth at home, in church, in each and every undertaking for the well being of all those with whom she labored. Even in her defeats and disappointments she was at all times a heroine, and faced each tomorrow in order that it might be a little better than today. Born of a strong pioneering family, a beloved father and mother, she grew up with this county and helped materially in its building. Daughter of the late George A. Gray whose name is still a blessed memory, this woman carried on in her daily living

her father's plans and ideals. Married in early life to Joseph H. Separk, teacher, idealist, builder, she for four decades marched heroically by his side with love and unbounded devotion and aided in his labors as a true helpmeet for him. She saw in her lifetime this county emerge from a primitive order of things into a society of men and matrons, mills and machines, schools and houses of God, and a program of progress the like of which no other Carolina community has yet experienced. And she was a part of it all, understood, appreciated and assisted in its marvelous advance. A sister of many brothers and sisters, an aunt of many nephews and nieces, she held together all the traditions of her family and became at all times the heart and the strength of her blood kin. One of her brothers, a man himself of noble attainments, said to me only yesterday, "May was the strongest member of our clan—to her we all looked with confidence and always relied upon her judgment for help." A citizen of this city, known and loved by multitudes here and everywhere, Mrs. Separk has left her years, sixty-two of them, as monuments alive in the hearts of those who knew her. A never failing and devoted member of this church for the length of her days, she was at all times eager, ready, and filled with energy for the projects of Christ's community of which she made herself both day and night a dynamic part. We will miss the guiding hands of hers that so long have helped in doing our work here. We cannot soon replace her consecration of life within these historic walls. Servant of God—well done.

Tomorrow is another day. With her memory still fragrant in our lives we will not surrender to our grief. We will as members of the family and friends, her friends, arise and build, build the foundations more firmly, build the walls more erect, build the structure of Christ's Church more enduring, because she spent her days here and gave us so much of her inspiration. I close with the words of the brave and undaunted poet, Robert Browning, the very words I used in the last message she heard from my lips: "When I

see day succeed the darkest night, how can I speak but as I know. My speech must be throughout the darkness—it will end. The light that did burn will burn.” Yes, will burn more brightly in all the endless years of God, whose candle she was and is.

May Gray Separk—Hail and Farewell; Farewell and Hail.

BENEDICTION

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.”

ORGAN RECESSIONAL

AT THE GRAVE

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: Behold, your God will come and save you.

“For the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him and His righteousness unto children’s children.”

“Forasmuch as the spirit of the departed hath returned to the God who gave it, we therefore commit this body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body: according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

PRAYER

“Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord and with whom the souls of the faithful after death are in strength and gladness, we give Thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those Thy servants who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labor. And we beseech Thee that we, with all those who have finished their course in faith, may have our perfect consummation and bliss in Thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally: we meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, and may receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.’ Grant this, we beseech Thee, O Merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.”

BENEDICTION

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.”

IN MEMORIAM

FUNERAL SERVICES OF MRS. J. H. SEPARK

The Officiating Minister, The Reverend C. Excell Rozzelle,
Pastor of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North
Carolina.

THE CHOIR

Mrs. Arthur M. Dixon	Mr. R. Lee Spencer
Mrs. G. Rush Spencer	Mr. Samuel S. Shuford
Mr. Robert S. Barkley, Organist	

PALLBEARERS

ACTIVE

S. N. Boyce	Robert A. Mayer
A. J. Kirby	C. W. Boshamer
R. G. Cherry	C. W. Gunter
J. W. Atkins	Charles E. Hamilton

HONORARY

The Board of Stewards of Main Street
Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina.

Three Days of Anguish

Midnight of July 30, 1940, will never fade from my memory. My devoted wife just past the midnight hour had suffered a heart stroke and in less than five minutes she was still in death. Two physicians were with us, but their skill could be of no avail. Only a few minutes prior to her stroke, we were in conversation, neither having the slightest thought or fear that the Grim Reaper, Death, was so near. For minutes I was dazed, my brain reeled and refused to function. Then a frenzy of anguish swept over me and it seemed that my heart, too, would cease its beat. She who was so fine and sweet and pure, she with whom I had lived in such happiness and in such hallowed contentment for more than two score years had left me never to return. Nevermore was I to look into those wonderful eyes, nevermore was I to see that happy smile, nor hear the voice that to me had been such music through the years.

My mind then went to our devoted son, Joe. He had been ill for many weeks, but was now well and ready for his return home. I knew that the blow to him would be great for each had idolized the other.

Morning finally came, sleep had been far from my thought. Sharing the deep sorrow with me were brothers and sisters, and others of kith and kin, and alike, loving and devoted friends in great numbers. To me came the thought that "In the midst of life we are in death," and "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." All those suffering with me tried to console, but continually there flashed in my mind the poet's words, "That loss is common, doth not make mine own less bitter, rather more."

The tragic news was relayed to Joe; at first he could not believe it and then to him the blow became staggering. For hours I could not even speak with him on the 'phone, but late in the afternoon my heart was greatly lightened when I received the following telegram from him:

I N M E M O R I A M

JULY 31, 1940.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

J. H. SEPARK

GASTONIA, N. C.

I WILL ALWAYS CHERISH THE EXPRESSION OF YOUR LOVE AND DEVOTION YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART OF MY GREAT LOVE FOR YOU AND OUR DEAR MOM MY EVERY EFFORT IS DEVOTED TO REGAINING MY COMPLETE HEALTH AND LIVING ON WITH YOU IN SERVICE TO HER MEMORY COME WHEN YOU CAN.

JOE

GASTONIA, N. C.

JULY 31, 1940

JOSEPH G. SEPARK

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

THE FINE SWEET SPIRIT OF YOUR TELEGRAM BROUGHT TO MY HEART MUCH OF SOOTHING COMFORT MOM'S FRIENDS YOUR FRIENDS AND MY FRIENDS HAVE COME IN VAST NUMBERS TO PAY RESPECTS AND BRING WORDS OF LOVE AND CONSOLATION ALL FAMILY CONNECTIONS AND YOUR MANY MANY FRIENDS SEND LOVE AND SYMPATHY.

DAD

A great concourse of relatives and friends crowded the church for the funeral service. Hymns that she had loved throughout life were sung by choir and audience. A devoted pastor read consoling scriptures, prayed fervently and delivered a beautiful tribute to the one whom he lovingly termed "elect lady." At the City of the Dead she was borne by the loving hands of devoted friends to her place of temporary interment in the shadow of the tombs of her sainted mother and father and there left under mounds of flowers, touches of God's beauty, so dear to her in life.

After the closing prayer and benediction, I returned to the home which for so many years had been the happy home of father, mother, and son, so dear and devoted each to each other. I realized that life's chain had been broken. One link had gone from this earth forever. I realized how vital it was that Joe and I should stand together, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, and spirit to spirit. My mind went back to that wonderful telegram and alike to the consoling telephone conversation we had shortly after the receipt of his wire. A new light swung out before my spirit eyes. A voice seemed to say to me, "Fear not, have faith in God and in His infinite compassion. He will soothe your aching heart, He will clear up your puzzled brain, He will comfort and sustain you." And again a voice seemed to say to me, "Thy son who is so dear to you and who was so dear to his mother will soon come to you well and strong, and he will be your greatest earthly support." And so I registered a firm resolve to keep faith with my commitment to God to take a mother's part in so far as is humanly possible in my contact with my devoted son, and to join him in keeping fresh and hallowed the memory of our beloved wife and mother.

Mrs. J. H. (May Gray) Separk
Joseph G. Separk

For fifteen months of my life. I had the high privilege of being the pastor of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina, where I came to know, appreciate, and love Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Separk and their son, Joe. The memory of those months remains still sweet and pleasant to my heart.

Mrs. Separk, the daughter of an extra-fine family, was a sincere and true-blue woman. She was incapable of pretense and hypocrisy. Her spoken word required the giving of no additional assurance.

In her lovely home, she was able to make everyone and anyone, rich or poor, high or low, cultured or uncouth, feel immediately at home, and unembarrassed, due to her graciousness and adaptability to any situation. No matter who came, be he bishop, college president, or other important personality, she was intellectually, socially, and culturally at home with him or her.

How she lavished love upon her husband and her son! What a mother to her boy she was! The bond between her heart and his, like the one between his heart and hers, was so strong, so precious, and so everlasting!

She and her husband brought their boy to Sunday School and church with them and caused him, thereby, to revere these helpful and sacred institutions.

W. A. LAMBETH.

Central Methodist Church
Asheville, North Carolina
April 11, 1941.

The above tribute was contributed by Dr. William A. Lambeth, pastor Central Methodist Church, Asheville, North Carolina, her devoted pastor through the years 1922-1923.

Mrs. Joseph H. Separk

*"Age cannot wither her, nor custom
stale her infinite variety."*

Through the long vista of fifty years in the ministry of the Church there appear in marvelous luster personalities who bear the trade-mark of the Kingdom of Heaven. If these appear against the background of much that is evil and forbidding, they all the more demonstrate the fascinating charm of that higher principle of life which they radiated to the world about them. Among the choice spirits of the days gone by I have an unforgettable memory of the living face of Mrs. Joseph H. Separk. Her life was lived through that period of modern history that witnessed more fundamental changes in the methods and customs and way of life than was ever experienced by any generation. A period that saw the change of the early modes of life in the South, from the quiet orderliness of a rural civilization, to the tumultuous movements of mechanized industrialism. A revolutionary period that put to the utmost test every fibre of men's souls. This beloved woman belonged to one of the pioneer families of the industrial South. She had contact in her youth with the uncertain processes that arose in a new world, and she lived to see the new order arise bringing with it success and prosperity.

Amid all the changes through which she passed there were certain things within her that did not change. Her simple childlike faith in the goodness of God never faded into the "light of common day." Her unselfish service to all about her radiant spirit did not grow stale with an ever unfolding life, or become sated with abounding prosperity. She never lost the common touch, yet so sure was she of the inner rectitude of her life that she was at home anywhere where life was clean and beautiful and good. She made a home—a home amid straightened circumstances, and a home

in abounding prosperity. It was a home to live in, not to show. Her beloved husband and son found there perpetually a place of security and rest from the toil of each succeeding day. It was not only a place of rest, but was vibrant with abounding life and good cheer. This most difficult and honorable career open to mankind was accomplished by her in high degree. In its physical setting it showed the ideals of good taste and innate refinement, and it had an atmosphere in which souls could grow. It was uncluttered by superficial form, but rich in the wealth of contentment and gracious hospitality. Her home was the rallying place for all her clan. One cannot forget such seasons as Christmas when all the folks came in to find just a bit more of hearty welcome and friendly interest than anywhere else. Each one found some token of the abiding affection and careful thoughtfulness that linked the family together and crowned the year with mutual appreciation and love.

But from her home there radiated an interest in that wider and much diversified field that grew up in the mill community about her. She visited the homes of the employees of their mills, and brought with her the fellowship that springs from real personal interest, and community life. There were none too poor to love and to trust her. She would agree that the courage and fortitude of her spirit grew out of her Church life. She had an altar, and that altar was the source of all comfort and hope and victory. She was a Christian woman. Her Christianity was of the sort that makes the heart glad. Her joy of life was none the less satisfying because it flowed out of a pure heart. She met the world with a smile. No wonder she could laugh—laugh aloud out of unrestrained joy. Yet she knew sadness too. The sadness for disillusioned youth, for burdened men, and for broken-hearted women. But she knew the cure for it all—the healing balm of human sympathy, and the touch of the Divine hand.

I was her pastor for four blessed years long ago. I can still see the quiet serenity of her face in worship, and

the lingering tear for the unfortunate, and the merry soulful laughter that bespoke a soul always at ease.

"If any drew her,
He would paint her unaware
With a halo around her hair.
And all hearts do pray 'God bless her'!
Ay, and always, in good sooth
We may be sure He doth."

F. J. PRETTYMAN.

The above tribute was contributed by Dr. Forrest J. Prettyman, her pastor through the years 1923-1927, now a member of the Maryland Conference and residing in Rockville, Maryland.

Mrs. Joseph H. Separk

Mrs. May Gray Separk belongs to that "Colony of heaven" of which St. Paul wrote, who make vital contributions to human good. It was not possible for her life to have been neutral, or compromising, or complacent. It could not do less than live in positive paths. The psalmist prayed, "Oh, that my ways were directed to keep His statutes." Mrs. Separk never needed to pray such a prayer. Her life was so strongly set in paths of duty, so firmly entrenched in devotion to service, so fixed in purpose, that keeping God's statutes needed no external force behind it. Like the Happy Warrior of Wordsworth in paraphrase, "Her high endeavors were an inward light, that made the path before her always bright." When her church needed its women organized for missionary activities, Mrs. Separk was in the forefront devoting time, thought, substance to the work. When her city needed a Women's Betterment Association, she became a charter member and an enthusiastic supporter of all its plans. When a Parent-Teacher Association was organized, she was a charter member, served as its president, and continued to hold membership in its organization. When the Gaston County Chapter of the American Red Cross was organized she became a

charter member and gave without stint of her time and means when promoting its work. Likewise, she was a charter member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter, and retained her membership in that organization throughout her life. Thus was her life lived, entering enthusiastically and joyously into any work which promised enlarged life for others. Few there be who ever show wider interest, and thus her contribution was made to civic, social, and church activities; and always uppermost was her church. Her devotion to the church organization, and her devotion to the church services, as well as her continued and abiding interest at all times in everything that made for the welfare of her church was continued inspiration to any minister.

Her home was a model of elegance, culture, and refinement. She was always a gracious hostess. Hospitality knew no boundary line. It was a place of recreation, social elegance, and elevated conversation. Throughout her life her home was a delightful resting place to all who were privileged to enter. The value of such a life can never be properly appraised. Truly, "She has done what she could," and "what she could" was no small thing. If treasure in heaven is in proportion to investment here in spiritual values, hers indeed must be a rich inheritance.

The above tribute was contributed by Dr. James B. Craven, pastor of West Market Street Methodist Church, Greensboro, North Carolina, her devoted pastor through the years 1929-1933.

May Gray Separk An Appreciation

I first knew her as a most attractive, brilliant and vivacious girl in her early teens as a student in old Gaston Institute.

Then several years later, I observed her as a young lady with the charm of a very unusual personality. Also, I noted with interest how a boyhood friend of mine paid her court,

and how her husband-to-be almost adored her. Their courtship was beautiful and when he finally won her heart everybody offered him sincerest congratulations.

Many years later I had the distinction of serving her as a pastor for two brief years during which ministry she was always genuinely appreciative, sympathetic and encouraging.

She and her wonderful father and kind mother live in my life as among the small, choicest circle of those who have meant most to me in all that I have sought to attain in life. Their confidence, love and tender ministries are embalmed in my heart forever.

May Gray Separk's name stands out at the very top of all those whom I have known as being unusually talented, faithful in friendship, generous in sympathy and encouragement, loyal to all Christian ideals, magnetic of personality, and profoundly consecrated to Christ. She was a born leader, a most positive influence in the lives of all who knew her, and a Christian of the rarest type.

Her home-going has deeply saddened and impoverished us all—her church, her city and her generation—but her presence in the Father's House makes Heaven more real and enchanting than ever before.

May the memory of her beautiful, useful life perennially inspire us all to be like her: high-minded, pure-hearted, generous-spirited, noble and faithful even unto death.

Her friend,

JOHN W. MOORE.

The above tribute was contributed by the Reverend John W. Moore, pastor of the Mooresville First Methodist Church, Mooresville, North Carolina, her devoted pastor through the years 1933-1935.

A Pastor's Tribute To May Gray Separk 1940

As a young man in college I first came to know Mrs. Joseph H. Separk (nee May Gray of Gastonia) when I was invited to spend some time in her home. There for the first time I met and began to love this admirable woman who has made such an impression upon my life. For the past thirty-two years it has been my good fortune to continue my associations with Mrs. Separk and to know her as a very intimate friend. In 1935 I came to Main Street Methodist Church as the minister in charge and, of course, was placed immediately in a rare position of comradeship with this beloved woman. Not a week passed, hardly a day, that we were not thrown together for some sort of common endeavor and mutual labor. Thus I came to know more and more intimately the real golden value of this woman, wife and mother. From this association I speak out of my heart and lay a flower upon her blessed memory.

Mrs. Separk, as a member of the church and as a diligent laborer therein, was a most remarkable leader, inspirer, and encouraging fellow worker. When others seemed to grow weary and falter at the heavy tasks about them this unfailing Christian laborer never lost her fine and optimistic spirit, faith, and idealism. I have seen her in days of gloom and hours when others were ready to quit reinspire a whole missionary society to do its best and to continue its pressing task. I could depend on Mrs. Separk to be in her place on the Sabbath day and in her pew where she always entered into the worship of God with humility and unfailing faith. How I miss her bright face today and feel a little weaker because one of my good companions in Christ has left us for a fairer world. The church and all good people will never forget the name and the energy of May Gray Separk in the house of God and busy doing His work. Main Street Church will never be quite the same since she went away. Neither will there arise another to

take her place in our midst. Servant of God, well done.

Mrs. Separk as a home-maker was far above and beyond the average housewife. Where others grew careless and indifferent and neglectful of their homes, this woman always was thoroughly consecrated to her task inside that lovely house yonder on Second Avenue. My, what a retreat she made it for her son and husband when their busy days were finished. There she ministered to their perplexities and cares, soothing out furrowed faces and restoring confidence when men's hearts were failing. My, what a dream-land of inspiration to husband and son in yon library with her presence. She was ever the heart of that household and the center of all those hopes and ideals. Every room there bears the fragrance of her presence today—memories that will endure when all the earthly has failed. God in Heaven came to reign in the places where she dreamed and toiled and worked to make a house into a real home for those dear to her. I can hear her laughter now as she brightened every corner of the spot so beloved by her. I can see her radiant face as she welcomed me into that inner sanctuary where Heaven and earth seemed to meet. May Gray Separk, what a church leader you were, yes, and what a home-maker for your adoring family and loved ones.

A house is made of bricks and stones,
Of posts and piles and piers
But a home is made of loving deeds
That last a thousand years.

The men of the earth build houses
Their foundations, walls, and domes,
But the women of the Earth, God bless them
The women build the homes.

Such a woman was this creator and builder.

Mrs. Separk was a friend to all, to the rich and to the poor, to the white and to the colored, to the successful and to the defeated. In fact one of her brothers declared to

me—May was the strongest Gray by name, and to her all of our large family looked with confidence for advice and help. A poor young woman spoke to me on the street one day—Mrs. Separk deserves all the eulogy you can bestow upon her—she was my friend in days of loneliness—she gave me hope when all seemed to be despair—God bless her memory forever. So the tributes come from all our people, tributes of love and appreciation—memories from sad hearts and glad—flowers from the hand of the innocent child and the rugged old man who knew her worth.

What more can I say of May Gray Separk? Well I consider the words of earth's wisest man her tribute, "Who can find a virtuous woman? Her price is far above the rubies." And so I leave these words upon her bier and let my eulogy rest just there.

The above tribute was contributed by the Reverend C. Excell Rozzelle, pastor of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, High Point, North Carolina, her pastor through the years 1936-1941. This special tribute was contributed in addition to the eulogy delivered on the occasion of her funeral service.

It was not my privilege to serve as Mrs. May Gray Separk's pastor. For four years it was my privilege to be her presiding elder. I, therefore, observed her intermittently; yet for four years I felt in an unusual way the influence of her power in the Church of which she was a member. Among those approximately eighteen thousand Methodists whom it was my privilege to serve during those four years Mrs. May Gray Separk was one of those rare personalities who stood out prominently. Her keen perception, her remarkably astute intellect, her proverbial womanly fortitude, her patience, her integrity and constancy, her piety and devotion—these traits of character were outstandingly conspicuous in her life, and made people love her, for they couldn't help it. She pioneered in every field of worthy activity. She was not only a helper; she was a leader. Her dynamic leadership was ever inspired by a practical and beautiful vision. She really believed that

she was responsible for the talents which God had given her, and He gave her many, and she improved all these as one keenly conscious that she must render account. She gathered roses while they bloomed. She attracted attention by the unconscious grace of her person and manner. Her heart was a stranger to every other feeling but love, a love not chilled by selfishness, nor daunted by danger, nor weakened by worthlessness, nor stifled by ingratitude. Wherever she went and amid all her associations she increased the joys of others, lifted veils from human hearts, and threw sunshine amid the darkest scenes of life.

It is my privilege now to be the pastor of her companion of *forty* years. She was all the world to him; he was all the world to her. The world is ever rarely permitted to look upon a more dutiful devotion between husband and wife. The gentle tendrils of her heart were entwined about one who loved, protected and cherished her until death did them part. It was Goethe who said: "We are shaped and fashioned by what we love." We think Goethe spoke a truth. So, anyone who knows Joe Separk as he lived and as he lives now can tell with what devotion he loved, and with what artistic workmanship May Gray Separk builded a real man. Lord Byron, in speaking of marriage, has said, "It is the bloom or blight of all men's happiness." Joe Separk spent his marital years in a garden of perennial blooms. Hard, indeed, it has been for him to struggle alone. No, not alone, for her spirit whispers to him through the days, "I am not lost, but gone before." And truly he can say of her, in the expressive words of William Allen White, the renowned journalist, written after the death of Mary White, his daughter, "But the soul of her, the glowing, gorgeous, fervent, soul of her, surely is flaming in eager joy upon some other dawn."

The above tribute was contributed by the Reverend Claude H. Moser, her presiding elder, 1936-1940, now pastor of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina.

The development of a noble personality is the greatest achievement in all the universe of God. The possibilities of it are created of God, but the development is wrought by the person involved with the coöperation of the Divine Trinity. After all earthly things, after even the sun, moon and stars, have served their purpose and as such ceased to be, the human spirit fitted by the experience of this life for companionship with God will have all the freshness of a glorious dawn. That was peculiarly true of Mrs. May Gray Separk. As a girl and young woman, hers was a radiant personality. The added years did not in her case take away the radiance, but rather increased its effective powers.

Her father, Mr. George A. Gray, was a man of very unusual ability. In the construction of cotton mills, and in the production of yarn it may well be doubted if he has had a superior. But it was in his human relations that his influence will last longest. Of the people who worked in the mills that he managed, he knew hundreds and perhaps thousands by name. And they all had the comfortable feeling that he was their friend. The great preacher, his pastor and friend, Dr. G. H. Detwiler, once remarked that he carried such a wholesome atmosphere about him that it was a delight to be in his presence.

His oldest daughter, May, was strikingly like him. Quick to see the essential elements in any situation, her decisions were made without hesitation, and her plans executed with dispatch.

In early life she was married to Mr. Joseph H. Separk who soon showed that he had unusual gifts in the management and financing of cotton mills. She, therefore, spent her entire life in a cotton mill atmosphere, and her own development and that of Gastonia rang along parallel lines. Though her contacts were necessarily more with the management and financing of the mills, it may be said with great satisfaction that she always had the human touch. There was no girl who worked in the mills of her father or

husband so timid but that she might have gone into the presence of Mrs. Separk unabashed and left feeling grateful for the natural outpouring of her affection. And in the councils that had to do with the human aspects of the difficult problems of cotton mill life, those who could not plead for themselves always had in her an intelligent and forceful advocate.

In church and community life her leadership was manifest throughout her entire mature life. This leadership was recognized by her fellow workers not grudgingly but gratefully, not only because of her unusual capacity for leadership, but also because she was so generous in giving credit to others for their labors and influence in the accomplishment of any task.

Romance flowered in her young life as she met and wed Joseph H. Separk. She made her home a delightful haven for her husband and son, Joseph Gray Separk. It was there that all her gifts and graces came into fullest fruition. It was there that the wealth of her affection was poured out most bounteously. It was a glorious privilege for husband and son to rise up and call her blessed.

After the death of her parents, and even before, her younger brothers and sisters found in her a wise and sympathetic counsellor.

The more or less constant stream of visitors who entered her home carried away with them not only fragrant memories of a delightful hospitality, but also a greater inspiration for noble living and achievement.

Like her Lord, she was simple, sincere, kindly, sympathetic, patient, forgiving, helpful and courageous. She had convictions, and had no hesitation in expressing them. God's side was her side, and it never seemed to occur to her to be anywhere else.

By her living she has enriched many a life. It is a source of great comfort to her loved ones to feel assured that

under fairer skies we shall have an unbroken fellowship with her again on the other side.

The above tribute was contributed by the Reverend J. A. Baldwin of Charlotte, North Carolina, a devoted friend through the years.

An Appreciation

In recognition of the loving and faithful services of May Gray Separk, who went suddenly and quietly from us on July 30th, 1940, the Woman's Missionary Society of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, N. C., desires to express a sense of personal loss for our church, our Society and our community.

Through the years she served willingly and faithfully where the need was greatest. She was especially gifted as a leader, using tact to an unusual degree. Her worth can be measured only by the loss which her passing occasions.

We should not be overly sad as we pay tribute to one who has meant so much to our church but rather we should rejoice in the splendor of her example and be grateful for the inspiration which her life leaves for us.

We offer our sympathy to the members of her family and bid them seek comfort in the teaching of our Christian faith, remembering, that love always has a reunion and larger life awaiting.

We wish a copy of this appreciation sent to her family, a copy recorded in the minutes of our Society and a copy published in the North Carolina Christian Advocate.

Mrs. T. E. Summerow,
Mrs. F. P. Rockett,
Mrs. J. R. Dellinger,
Mrs. J. K. Dixon.

In Memoriam Mrs. Joseph H. Separk

The Woman's Club joins with other social, civic, and religious organizations in our city in a tribute of love and appreciation for our departed friend and co-worker, Mrs. Joseph H. Separk.

With a faith too deep for doubt we would not question the will of a divine Providence in removing her from our midst, still in her passing there is left an aching void. Many of us have worked with her for years, planning for the best interests of the organization and she always with helpful suggestions and encouragement urged us forward in the work.

Serving in official capacity as President, Vice-President, District Chairman, Federation Director, of the Club, chairman of important committees—regular in attendance—she left an example of efficiency and faithfulness well worthy of emulation. Interested in the state and county work of the club she helped widen the range of influence of the local club through attendance at these various meetings. In these and many other ways she through the club touched the life pulse of our little city and we as a club pay this tribute to a dearly loved friend and co-worker. May we commend to the younger generation the example of this devoted servant and pray that her mantle may fall on many of our younger members.

We shall miss her as we assemble and mingle together in our social as well as our business meetings, but this is the message she would leave with us—

“Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal,
Dust thou art to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.”

We suggest a copy of this tribute be sent to her husband, to the family, to the *Gastonia Gazette*, and a copy be recorded in the minutes of our club.

Mrs. J. Y. Miller,
Mrs. C. E. Rozzelle,
Mrs. Jas. F. Thomson,
Committee.

Gastonia, North Carolina

In the sudden passing of May Gray Separk, beloved wife of Joseph H. Separk, mother of Joseph Gray Separk and daughter of the late George A. and Jennie Withers Gray, the Gastonia Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, lost one of its most loyal and faithful charter members. By the charm and beauty of her personality, the brightness and joy of her disposition and her willingness to serve in all the walks of life, she greatly endeared herself to each member of our organization.

Mrs. Separk was a woman of many and varied gifts, all of which she used in the service of her church, her home and the entire community.

We, the members of the Gastonia Chapter U. D. C., shall cherish her memory in our hearts with this thought, "She is not dead, just gone to a higher and sweeter service. It is the passing of friends and loved ones like this, who are making Heaven into Home for those of us who are left."

"For love will dream and faith will trust,
Since He who knows our need is just,
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must."

Be it resolved:

1st—That we humbly and sincerely thank God for her life and influence among us.

2nd—Though the loss of our beloved friend and co-worker is one that we greatly mourn, we bow to God's sovereign will, knowing that "He doeth all things well."

3rd—That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family, and that they be spread upon a page of our Minutes set aside in loving memory of May Gray Separk.

Resolutions Committee:

Mrs. S. A. Robinson, Chairman,

(Sue G. Robinson)

Mrs. L. N. Glenn

(Nena Ray Glenn)

Mrs. D. R. LaFar

(Louise S. LaFar)

My dear Mr. Separk,

I'm quite sure that we of the Lowell Woman's Club feel most keenly the passing of Mrs. Separk. She was one of the Committee to organize this club and with her wisdom and personality has helped us on many occasions when we needed support and encouragement.

Please accept our sympathy and know that each of us shall cherish her memory most fondly.

Sincerely,

The Lowell Woman's Club

By Mrs. Joe Hudson, Sec.

Lowell, N. C.

August 4, 1940

May Gray Separk

May Gray Separk died suddenly at her home on Tuesday night, July 30. Mrs. Separk had been identified with the textile industry all her life, for she was the eldest daughter of George A. Gray, one of Gaston County's pioneer cotton manufacturers. Later she became the wife of Joseph H. Separk, who was also a leader in the textile industry, holding from time to time many honorary offices bestowed upon him by the industry in which he has spent most of his lifetime. In late 1929 and 1930, in the face of decreasing consumption of cotton, Mrs. Separk herself took a hand

in the industry's affairs and, as president of the Gastonia Woman's Club, was one of the leaders in organizing the "Wear Cotton Movement" financed by this association. Her many conferences with George A. Sloan, then president of the Cotton-Textile Institute furnished the inspiration from which sprung National Cotton Week. Although she never took personal credit for it, this ever-growing cotton promotion program will always be a national and industry-wide monument to her memory.

The above taken from *King Cotton*, weekly issue of August 2, 1940, published for members of Southern Combed Yarn Spinners Association.

In Memoriam

MRS. MAY GRAY SEPARK

1878-1940

"A Christian Gentlewoman of Three-Score Years"

From Bulletin of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina, Sunday, August 4, 1940.

MEMORIAL WINDOW

Just prior to Easter of 1941 the husband, Joseph H. Separk, placed in the Gray Memorial Window in Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina, a memorial glass to the memory of his devoted wife, May Gray Separk, and at the same time the sons and daughters placed a memorial glass to the memory of their devoted mother, Jennie Withers Gray, wife of George Alexander Gray, Sr. These two memorial plates were dedicated at the Easter morning service by the pastor, The Reverend C. Excell Rozzelle.

MAY GRAY SEPARK SCHOLARSHIP

The Woman's Society of Christian Service has set aside from its funds a scholarship at Brevard College for a worthy boy or girl from the Gastonia District. This fund will be known henceforth as the MAY GRAY SEPARK SCHOLARSHIP, and will be awarded each year to a deserving youth. It is

a fitting memorial to the name of the late Mrs. Separk, one of our valued members, now promoted.

The above copied from bulletin of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina. Date of issue, September 28, 1941.

Rockville, Maryland
August 1, 1940

My dear Brother Separk:

What sad news it is to hear of the passing of dear Mrs. Separk. That radiant spirit that spread sunshine and gladness has left this world so very much poorer. I have always carried in my heart a sense of debt to her that I have never dreamed of being able to repay. During my adventure into the South she gave me courage and inspiration to carry on as best I could. I felt a real joy every time I came in contact with her. My last visit to Gastonia I can never forget, especially the evening I spent in your home surrounded by many friends who really seemed to care for my coming. She was the life of the party, and by her gracious hospitality made an occasion in my life never to be forgotten. You two have lived together as an example and inspiration to all in these unhappy and changing times. I have just been through a very serious spell of sickness. During July I spent sixteen days in a hospital in Baltimore. I fell into the hands of one of those wizards of the knife, and am now, so far as I know, on my way back to my former state.

Please give my love and sympathy to each one of the family of Grays and Separks.

You have my deepest sympathy.

Sincerely,

F. J. Prettyman.

While highly personal and intimate, I, nevertheless, have felt constrained to publish the above letter from a devoted friend and sympathizer.

Sketch of Life May Gray Separk

EARLY HOME LIFE

Her early years were spent in the towns of Dallas, Lowell, and Gastonia. In these early years, her environs touched the simple and wholesome life as it was lived by those of the countryside and the carefree, frugal and God-fearing neighbors of the village. It was the custom in those days for the older children of the home to share in the work of the day, thus she early learned much of the fundamentals of home-making that was to be so splendidly employed in the days and years that lay ahead.

Being the oldest child of the family, upon May was placed, even while in her pre-teen age, quite a large share of the responsibility of assisting her mother in the care and training of the younger children. No doubt, the spirit and willingness with which she entered into this service accounted through the years in large measure for the great devotion of brothers and sisters each for the other.

EARLY SCHOOL DAYS

In life she spoke often of her early school days. The village teachers were none too plentiful in those days. Most of the schools were small, private, subscription schools and in these she had her early schooling. The typical school of the day was a one-room structure, but more often a small corner room in a private home, the furniture plain and meager, and adequate heat in winter was most rare. Pupil equipment for the lower grades scarcely went beyond the slate, pencil, reader and blue back speller.

On moving to Gastonia in the early part of 1888, she found the academy available, and it was there she had the preparation that led to her college years.

Many of the splendid citizens of Gastonia of past years and of the present, both men and women, were her school day friends, and friends they have remained through the years.

COLLEGE LIFE

In the fall of 1894 at the early age of fifteen she entered the Asheville Female College, Asheville, North Carolina. This college was owned and operated by Dr. James Atkins, later to become a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It was there that she came under the tutelage of his brother, Professor B. E. Atkins, the father of our town's Messrs. James W. and E. D. Atkins and of Mrs. F. C. Michael. At this college she spent two very happy and fruitful years. Her next college year was spent at the Randolph Macon College for Women, Lynchburg, Virginia, then as now, one of the highest grade colleges for women in the South. During these years of college life she formed some of the finest friendships of her life. It was likewise in these college years that she acquired the real foundation basis of the most worthwhile life, namely, the ability to place spiritual values ahead of all others in our common life.

CHURCH LIFE

At an early age she accepted Christ and immediately joined the church of her choice, the Main Street Methodist Episcopal, South, the church of her father and mother, and later to become the church home of the entire family of the late George A. and Jennie Withers Gray. This she regarded as the most important step of her life. She at once found her place in the Sunday School and in the young people's organizations of the church. Through more than half a century her consecration and her talents were given without stint to her church. It was in the women's work of the church that she found her broadest field of usefulness. In the early 1900's she assisted in the organization of The Ladies Aid Society of the church, and was throughout its life an active and zealous member and served as its president

for many years. The constant growth of the church required the re-organization of the women's work, and so The Ladies Aid Society was merged into a group of church circles. Mrs. Separk was elected the first general chairman of these groups, and this office she held for many years. In this work she gave the best of her talents and leadership and found a joy in service which greatly enriched her life.

She was also an active and interested member of The Woman's Missionary Society from the date of its organization to the day of her death. Her zeal for the work of this society never abated. Throughout her years she attended many society conferences and conventions.

AS WIFE

A certain June night in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-eight is still fresh in my memory as it will ever be, for it was on that night that I met for the first time the one who was to be the idol of my affections and my helpmeet through the years. The months that followed were the happiest that had yet come into my life. The days followed the days and the months the months in joyous and contented succession. Came the night, that glad happy night, the fine memory of which still lingers with me, when I secured the parental consent that the daughter, May Gray, should be mine to wed. As I placed upon her finger the engagement ring, I uttered the words which were later to be engraved in the wedding ring, "AEI PISTOS."

And in that wedding ring was inscribed "AEI PISTOS," always faithful, or forever faithful. A free translation of this would be, ever the same and unchangeable, or faithful to the very end. That ring is still precious to me. Fresh in my memory still is the day when she accepted me for the better or for the worse. As I look at that ring, I am reminded of the fidelity with which she wore it through the years. It is one of my dearest earthly possessions, it shall be mine to the end of my days, and it shall then be my hope that it



MRS. MAY GRAY SEPARK

From a photograph taken while at Randolph Macon
Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1897.



MRS. MAY GRAY SEPARK

The above picture was taken in May, 1900,
just a few days after our wedding.

may come into the hands of one who truly loved her.

I have not the words with which to describe her as wife. She was always good, always gentle, always kind. She was sympathetic of nature and that sympathy was at all times as generous as it was constant. She was open-hearted and open-minded and I do not believe that there was ever locked in her heart aught that she could not and would not reveal to me.

In November 1900 until well into the spring of 1901, I suffered a severe illness, typhoid fever. Tenderly and patiently she nursed me through that illness of more than three months and kept me ever at the very heart of her solicitude through the many months of my convalescing.

After serving as principal of the Oakland High School, Gastonia, for three years, we closed our school to make way for the coming of the graded school system. I made the decision to retire from school work and enter business life, and in this new venture she became my staunchest supporter and my constant inspiration.

AS MOTHER

Upon her had been showered a wealth of love and affection by father, mother, sisters and brothers and by husband, the zeal and purpose of whose hearts were dedicated to the high ideal of putting into her life the greatest possible degree of happiness. But as I think back through the years, through the glad and glorious years, there comes to me the thought, nay the knowledge, that her greatest happiness came to her when God gave us through adoption the son of our love and devotion, Joseph Gray Separk. Through his early years he was the object of her tender love and solicitude. Tenderly she nursed him through all those illnesses to which most young children fall heir. With patience and fidelity she brought him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She ever found it a joyous occupation to render assistance to him in his early studies. She found great pleasure in following with solicitous concern his years of

high school work. When ready for college, she equally shared with his Dad a thrill and satisfaction. His conduct and deportment throughout his four years of college life at Trinity College and Duke University were a continuous source of pride and satisfaction to both of us. The day of his graduation in 1930 brought to us one of the happiest and most memorable days of our lives.

The days and years of his young manhood were very dear to both of us and into her life and mine he put much of joy and happiness. The last few months of his life, our son had been ill, but at the date of her death he was well and ready for his return home. How well do I recall her great solicitude for him during this illness and equally do I recall his great happiness at the thought of his return, strong and well and happy. Death denied her this happy event here on the earth, but they are together now in our Father's house. No son ever had a more devoted mother, nor did mother ever have a more devoted son.

AS DAUGHTER

Rarely do we find greater devotion than existed among daughter and father and mother. With the devoted father she had thirty-four years of joyous, happy living and with the mother of her love it was given her to enjoy an additional eleven years. Many have thought and still think that May inherited in large measure her keenness of intellect and her strong sense of judgment and her highly analytical mind from her father, George Alexander Gray, one of the most remarkable men whom I have ever known. From her mother, Jennie Withers Gray, one of God's generous-hearted, noble women, she inherited her deep sense of frugality, a sympathetic heart and her generous nature, characteristics which were apparent in every act and impulse of her life.



MRS. MAY GRAY SEPARK

From a photograph taken in the year 1909.

AS SISTER

As sister in the economy of the family circle, I willingly abide by the verdict of her brothers and sisters. If there was ever a rift in this circle, or the least of an estrangement, the knowledge of it has to this hour never reached my ears. There was none, for where love and confidence abide, there can be naught of discord and strife. The affection which was ever present in her life for brothers and sisters remained undimmed and untarnished through the years.

With her passing the chain of brothers and sisters was for the first time broken. The following brothers and sisters are left: J. Lander Gray*, George Alexander Gray, Charles Dow Gray, Ethel Gray (Mrs. F. D.) Barkley, Blanche Gray (Mrs. W. G.) Hamner, Maude Gray (Mrs. P. H.) Efird, Myrtle Gray (Mrs. H. S.) Legare.

AS FRIEND

So great was her appreciation of friends and friendships that she easily made her loyalty to them a vital part of the philosophy of her life. She had great faith that each one whom she had builded into her life's friendship scroll would remain through the years constant and loyal to her memory.

There is a thought in Tennyson's "Ulysses" highly worthy of a niche in one's philosophy of life. It is this bit of advice of Polonius given to his son: "Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried, Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

That was, indeed, one of the strong characteristics of her life. I cannot believe that she ever lost the friendship of a friend. To me it is a consolation that her real friends have been constant in their friendliness to me.

* Deceased since above was written.

Short Sketch of the Activities of the Late May Gray Separk

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE YEARS

Her early school years were spent in Dallas and Lowell, North Carolina. On moving to Gastonia in 1888 she entered The Academy and remained there through her grammar and high school years.

In 1894 she entered Asheville Female College, Asheville, North Carolina, where she spent two years. The next year she attended Randolph Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia.

CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Her Sunday School connection began at the early age of seven and for the next fifty-five years she was active in Sunday School attendance and work. Fifty-two of those years were in the Sunday School of Main Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Gastonia, North Carolina.

She joined the church at the early age of nine and on moving to Gastonia she joined the Main Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South, here, and continued a regular and active member until the date of her death, July 31, 1940. Throughout her years she was actively engaged in church work. She was a charter member of the Ladies Aid Society and remained in that society until it merged with the Woman's Work of the church (The Circles). For more than ten years she was General Chairman of the church circles. On the organization of the Board of Christian Service she was elected Assistant Chairman and remained in this office until her death.

She was a charter member of the Woman's Missionary Society of the church in which organization she held many offices throughout her years. Rarely did she miss a meet-

ing of this organization. To this work she gave generously in time, service and means. Throughout the years she attended many conferences and conventions of the various church organizations.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

She was a charter member of the Woman's Betterment Association of Gastonia and served several terms as Vice-President and President. This merged into the Gastonia Woman's Club of which she was one of the incorporators and a charter member and was for many years its president. During her administration as president the Wear Cotton movement was launched and this movement spread throughout the country.

She was a charter member of The Parent-Teacher Association in which association she served terms as Treasurer, Vice-President and as President.

She was a charter member of the Gaston County Chapter of the American Red Cross. To this she gave without stint in service, time and means. Throughout the influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919 served as Chairman of Food Supplies. For distinguished service stretching over an excess of four hundred hours was awarded a service badge by the American Red Cross. In 1918 was made a life member of the Gaston County Chapter.

Was a charter member of The United Daughters of the Confederacy and retained her active membership until the date of her death. She was one of the past presidents of this organization.

Was one of the organizers of the Nutritional Camp in Gastonia and devoted a major interest to this work.

Served for several years as a member of the Intercity Council of Gastonia.

Was an organization member of the Gastonia Garden Club and retained membership and a vital interest for several years.

AS HOSTESS

Throughout our forty years of married life our home was ever open to guests and friends. During those years scores and scores of ministers, bishops, high church officials, college and university presidents and friends and acquaintances from far and near found her ever a generous and interested hostess. Many times throughout these years her home was open to many entertaining organizations.

The above represents some of her activities throughout her useful and fruitful years.



MRS. MAY GRAY SEPARK

From a photograph taken in our new home
in the fall of 1921.

My Final Tribute

To you, my wife May, dear and devoted to me and to our devoted son Joe, in life, and in that realm in which there is no death, dear and sweet and precious in memory.

You were to me through forty years all for which mortal man could hope. You were ever gentle, and patient, and kind. In our home your radiant personality was at all times in evidence, a benediction to the members of your household and shared generously by others of kith and kin and alike by the far flung lines of our friends who often shared with us the hospitality of our home.

More than once illness visited our home and on at least three occasions it was serious and of long duration. On those occasions you could not conceal from me the deep anxiety of your mind and spirit, yet at all times your courage and your faith kept you steady and unafraid and brought to me a faith and a confidence which enabled me to carry on.

More than a year and a half has passed since you so suddenly left me, but the memory of you and of your love for, and loyalty and devotion to me, and to our devoted son Joe, is as fresh as though it were yesterday.

I am thinking, as I have thought much through the years, of a chapter in your life that must, indeed, have been bitter for many an hour and week and month that had its beginning when, through the stress of economic depression, there came to me the greatest financial blow of my life. Then, indeed, there shone forth in your life and actions and attitudes a strength of character and a nobility of soul all too rare in this commercial age.

I could read in your speech and actions a deep solicitude for me and for our devoted son, Joe. I knew then, as I know now, that the burden of your hope and prayers was that each of us might, in high measure, maintain our mental

and spiritual poise. Both Joe and myself fully understood and appreciated the purpose of your resolve, and your mental attitude and spiritual commitments, and each of us tried as best we could to emulate those high resolves.

Until the date of my removal to another house your room remained intact just as you left it. Not an item of furnishing, not a single piece of bric-a-brac, so precious to you through your happy years, was disturbed. All of these seemed too sacred and hallowed through thy touch and through thy using. These have now been moved to another house and placed in a room dedicated to your blessed memory, and it is the earnest of my hope that they can remain intact until my summons shall come and after that I shall want them to come into the hands of that one, or those, who also truly loved you and who truly love your memory.

The house to which I have moved is to be my earthly abiding place and, though I have with me for companionship friends who are exceedingly kind, generous, and considerate, they cannot but know, as I know, that my real home has gone from me forever.

Could I speak to you now I would find great satisfaction in saying to you that I feel myself drawn closer and closer day by day to all those who genuinely loved you in life and still hold you in devoted memory.

This tribute I pay to you and I vow to hold you ever in sacred memory. In you I found throughout the hours, days, and years, love, constancy, and joy. I found in you the highest appreciation of spiritual values. I found in you never the faintest touch of envy, greed, avarice, or jealousy, and for all this I pay to you and to your memory the highest tribute. These were verily the gifts of God and they were given to blossom and fruit in a noble life. It is the earnest of my hope that I, too, may cultivate these gifts in my remaining days and years.

And so I say farewell to one, the like of whom I expect never to meet in this life.

JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

The Funeral Service

By the Pastor, The Reverend C. Excell Rozzelle

ORGAN PROCESSIONAL

The Choir Sang: "*Abide With Me*"

"Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou, who changest not, abide with me!

"I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me!

"I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

"Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

SCRIPTURE READING

"Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

"The righteous live for ever, and the care of them is with the Most High: with His right hand He shall cover them, and with His arm shall He shield them.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me;

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil;

My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations;

Before the mountains were brought forth,

Or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world,

Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

For a thousand years in Thy sight

Are but as yesterday when it is past,

And as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep:

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;

In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

So teach us to number our days,

That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants,

And Thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us;

And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us;

Yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. I am the way, the truth, and the life. If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Because I live, ye shall live also.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

"It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

"And he showed me a river of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there

shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

PRAYER

"Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life: since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of Thy holy will: not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding today. Consecrate with Thy presence the way our feet may go; and the humblest work will shine, and the roughest places be made plain. Lift us above unrighteous anger and mistrust into faith and hope and love by a simple and steadfast reliance on Thy sure will. In all things draw us to the mind of Christ, that Thy lost image may be traced again, and that Thou mayest own us at one with Him and Thee.

Amen."

"O God, who art the strength of Thy saints and who redeemest the souls of Thy servants; we bless Thy Name for all those who have died in the Lord, and who now rest from their labors, having received the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Especially we call to remembrance Thy loving-kindness and Thy tender mercies to this Thy servant. For all Thy goodness that withheld not his portion in the joys of this earthly life, and for Thy guiding hand along the way of his pilgrimage, we give Thee thanks and praise. Especially we bless Thee for Thy grace that kindled in his heart the love of Thy dear Name; that enabled him to fight the good fight, to endure unto the end, and to obtain the victory; yea, to become more than conqueror, through Him that loveth us. We magnify Thy holy Name that his trials and temptations being ended, sickness and death being passed, with all the dangers and

difficulties of this mortal life, his spirit is at home in Thy presence, at whose right hand dwelleth eternal peace. And grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that we who rejoice in the triumph of Thy saints may profit by their example, that, becoming followers of their faith and patience, we also may enter with them into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The Choir Sang: "*Sunset and Evening Star*"

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
For, though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Amen."

THE PASTOR'S TRIBUTE

Again and suddenly has tragedy come to one of our good homes—to a father and his well beloved son—a tragedy that has sorely afflicted a family and a multitude of friends—and has left us all stricken by a heavy grief that our frail hearts are incapable of bearing. Of course, we ask the usual questions that no mortal tongue can answer nor explain; of course, we puzzle our little minds and stand perplexed in the presence of such bitterness and human

anguish. But with empty hands and with palsied hearts we bow our heads before the great All Father and pray for sustaining grace and a faith in His goodness that will make us both strong and brave to carry on in the face of life's many vicissitudes. Like Job of old, that immortal prince of patience and spiritual assurance, we look up toward the heavens today and cry with him—Tho He slay me, yet will I trust Him—yet will I trust Him.

Only a few months ago the good wife and mother came so suddenly to the end of life's journey, and for the husband we lifted our prayers then. Now the son has gone the way of all mortality, and for the good father we now and here raise our voices in sympathy and petition to Him who understands thoroughly every ache and every human agony.

O God who went down in the tomb in Joseph's garden and lay three days among the dead, O God who bowed His head and said, "It is finished," look with pity upon all of us—but especially upon the father of this youth and give him a renewed confidence in thy Fatherhood and in thy matchless compassion. Hear our prayer today and for every day that brings to him the memory of this great grief. In Jesus' name fill his heart with comfort and hope, and may the peace that passeth all human understanding be his forever and forever.

This son of his father's love and life will in a little while lie by the side of those who have passed on before him—but his years of living in yonder home will always be a precious memory to this man and father who loved him more dearly than his own precious life. To the son came the best that life had to offer from a family's benevolent hand—and upon him was poured out an affection like none it has been my privilege to behold. Like David long ago weeping for his own boy—we feel the throb of a fatherly heart crying, Absolom, O Absolom, my son Absolom, my son, my son. Such is the emotion today as we pause a moment to say farewell.

Thirty years ago this child came to the Separk household and became the center of parental love and devotion—and for thirty years father and mother gave their best for their boy at home—in school and college—and in after life. Of course, today there hangs a heavy burden upon that home—one that seldom comes in a generation in such a manner. But in this hour a multitude of friends are giving their all in compassion to the one especially smitten. Besides this human token of our love, more blessed than what we have to offer, the Father in heaven pours out today upon Mr. Separk a fullness of power and superhuman strength that shall abide with him in all the lonely days to come.

May the words of our beloved Quaker poet—John Greenleaf Whittier, comfort us now—

“I know not where His islands lift their fronded palms in
air,

I only know I cannot drift beyond His love and care.

And so beside the silent sea I wait the muffled oar,

No harm from Him can come to me on ocean or on shore

And Thou, O Lord, by Whom are seen Thy creatures as
they be,

Forgive me if too close I lean my human heart on Thee.”

To you, father—to you, family—to you, friends—so heavily bereaved and so sorely stricken, may the hand of a consoling deity—even that of a loving Christ lift you up and make you strong—and guide you through the valley of sorrow and tears—until each can say—The Lord is my shepherd—I shall fear no evil; the Lord is the strength of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? Tomorrow let us take up again the burdens of life and carry bravely on in the name and under the banner of Him who said—Let not your hearts be troubled—ye believe in God believe also in me. Such is our faith in the darkness of today. May the sun shine brighter tomorrow and our feet find themselves in the everlasting pathway of the life Eternal. God bless and sustain all of you now and always.

Joseph Gray Separk—idol of his father's heart—beloved of all who knew him—courteous youth with brilliant mind—generous soul in all his dealings with others—child of an adorable home—my dear young friend and associate—I bid you farewell on earth—I hope to meet you in yon paradise of God—and enjoy again companionship with you and your precious mother who waits for the others of her family—and her multitude of friends—Joe Separk—hail and farewell—farewell and hail.

BENEDICTION

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.”

ORGAN RECESSIONAL

AT THE GRAVE

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come and save you.

“For the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him and His righteousness unto children's children.”

“Forasmuch as the spirit of the departed hath returned to the God who gave it, we therefore commit this body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body: according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

PRAYER

"Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord and with whom the souls of the faithful after death are in strength and gladness, we give Thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those Thy servants who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labor. And we beseech Thee that we, with all those who have finished their course in faith, may have our perfect consummation and bliss in Thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally: we meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, and may receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." Grant this, we beseech Thee, O Merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen."

BENEDICTION

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen."

FUNERAL SERVICES OF MR. JOSEPH G. SEPARK

The Officiating Minister, The Reverend C. Excell Rozzelle,
Pastor of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North
Carolina.

THE CHOIR

Mrs. Arthur M. Dixon	Mr. R. Lee Spencer
Mrs. G. Rush Spencer	Mr. Samuel S. Shuford
Mr. Robert S. Barkley, Organist	

PALLBEARERS

ACTIVE

C. W. Boshamer	R. B. Babington
Robert Van Sleen	James Mullen
Warren Y. Gardner	Phil Jackson
Robert Glenn	Charles E. Hamilton

HONORARY

The members of the John Wesley Bible Class of
Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia,
North Carolina.

Another Three Days of Anguish

November 9, 1940, is another day that will forever live in my memory. On that morning at eleven o'clock my dearly beloved son, Joe, left with a devoted uncle on a fishing and hunting trip, expecting to be gone for just two days. He was in health and in the finest of spirits. He looked forward to this trip with real enthusiasm. Never shall I forget his last words and they were, "Dad, take good care of yourself; I will bring you back some fish and a few squirrels." On that afternoon I listened over the radio to a football game, never with the slightest thought that within a few short hours heart-breaking news was to be brought to me. Just as the sun was setting, a few devoted friends brought to me those tragic words, "Your son, Joe, has had an accident, he is dead, an accidental gun-shot wound." In a moment I was well nigh paralyzed with anguish. Why or how my heart continued to beat, I will never know. To my eyes tears would not come. Grief was far too deep for tears.

Still carrying a heavy heart and a heavily burdened brain through the tragic death of my devoted wife, this my second blow seemed too great for human endurance. The devoted friends surrounding me were deeply touched, they proffered such sympathy as they could, but they did not know, nor could they know, aught of the depth of my sorrow for none had suffered as I was suffering the stripping of my earthly life of all that had been nearest and dearest to me in this life. I could only see myself as a lone creature, destined to live out my days with my grief and sorrow.

My hopes had been so high. My beloved son had been so devoted to me, he had shown such concern for my physical and mental well-being. His companionship had been so fine and so unselfish. The major part of his future lay before him, and I had such hopeful plans for his future, plans that were destined to prove highly agreeable and profitable, but all this was now shattered.

Throughout that night loving friends of his and mine remained with me for comfort and support. Night finally changed to day, day brought great streams of friends and messages of sympathy and love. Many of those who came had been high school and college friends of Joe's throughout the years. The sight of these and the sympathetic clasp of hands brought an ever increasing flood of tears, and many of these friends wept in sorrow with me. These and other friends helped me much in bearing the weight of passing hours. Another night passed, came another day and the hour at which before God's altar, so sacred through the years, his body would be placed for the funeral service.

As I walked down the church aisle, there met my gaze a pulpit and chancel rail filled with beautiful floral designs sent by loving friends in tribute to the son of my love and devotion. This scene was indeed a repetition of another just one hundred days ago for it was on that day when the body of my precious wife reposed before that same altar. The same minister, our devoted pastor, was in the pulpit, and choir and worshippers sang the same songs that were sung at the funeral services of wife and mother. With faith and confidence our pastor implored the Father to bring comfort and consolation to me and to those who were suffering with me. The beautiful and touching eulogy which he delivered is still fresh in my mind and thus I shall want it to be on to the end.

Those who bore the casket were of those of the inner circle of his love and confidence. Some were of his school-mates and collegemates in the happy days of boyhood and young manhood. From the church we carried him to the cemetery and placed him beside his mother for temporary repose. His and her final resting place will be in the Separk mausoleum just erected out of imperishable stone and marble and as a tribute to those who were dearer to me than all else in this our common world. As to what lies out before me in the years or days that are to be, I know not, but I have a confidence that emboldens me to believe that I can and will live day by day in loving memory of those who have gone on, and into the great reward.

Joseph G. Separk, 1940

A Tribute

Our city was shocked beyond our words to describe when the news went forth on November 9, 1940, that our young friend, Joseph G. Separk, had been mortally wounded on a hunting trip near Rockingham, N. C. Expressions of profoundest sympathy came immediately from the lips and pens of a multitude of friends from all over the state regarding the passing of this noble young man. Seldom had the city of Gastonia received such a blow as this one and only rarely have so many people poured out their hearts in a mutual compassion for the father of the young man, and for the various members of the bereaved household.

Joseph G. Separk was the only son of Senator Joseph H. Separk of Gastonia and the late May Gray Separk of sainted memory. Joe grew up in our city and lived the life of a normal and wholesome boy. He entered heartily into all the activities of youth, and by his charm of personality won hundreds of friends during his young life. He graduated from the Gastonia High School in the year 1925, a popular member of that large class of students. In the following September he entered Duke University, the alma mater of his good father, where he soon took high rank as a scholar and college leader. Due to a prolonged illness of typhoid fever Joe was unable to graduate until the Spring of 1930, but at that time he won his degree of Bachelor of Arts, a highly esteemed young man and capable of entering life's work. Young Mr. Separk came home from college to enter the Gray-Separk Mills Corporation where he became a valued member of the office force of that flourishing institution. Two years later he became a partner with his distinguished father in The Separk Sales Company, and remained in this place until his death in 1940.

Mr. Separk while in college took an active part in various campus activities, notably tennis, basketball, golfing, fraternity life. He had been for many years interested in boy scouting and the DeMolay degrees of Masonry. He was also a leader in all forms of social and civic activities of his native city, being also a life member of the Main Street Methodist Church, and a loyal friend of the pastor, Rev. C. Excell Rozzelle.

During his last days on earth Joe and his pastor had a long and though provoking walk together, and stopping in front of the Main Street Methodist Church building, Joe told of his hopes and aspirations, his dreams and his ideals, of helping his aging father in the business world, of living unselfishly for others, and of bringing happiness to others around him. Rarely had a youth so conversed with a minister and rarely had a minister heard such words of wisdom from one so young and ambitious.

The sentiment of Joe's last words with his beloved pastor are contained in the lines of this long forgotten poem:

Youth is our glory; here we stand,
Fearless and strong and free;
Build we now a new tomorrow
For humanity.

Ours the dreams that mold the future;
Ours the doubts and fears,
In our hands we hold the promise
Of the unknown years.

May we keep the strength to labor
And the will to learn.
Men of the past have served us;
We will serve in turn.

Joseph G. Separk, my young friend and associate, may the words of Luke's gospel be your eulogy—"He increased

IN MEMORIAM

in wisdom and stature; and in favor with God and with man." Such words in describing you, young man, are fitting for your life, thought, and personality. May the precious memory you leave behind always be green in our hearts, fragrant with the odors of love and hope. Peace to thy ashes and a flower for thy pall.

The above tribute was contributed by the Reverend C. Excell Rozelle, pastor of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, High Point, North Carolina, his pastor through the years 1935-1941. This special tribute was contributed in addition to the eulogy delivered on the occasion of his funeral service.

For the first time in its history the Gaston-Lincoln Chapter of the Duke University Alumni Association meets without its presiding officer and president, Mr. Joseph G. Separk. His absence from our ranks tonight, due to a fatal accident on November 9, 1940, brings to each and every member of this association a heartache and a profound sorrow which overshadow our meeting at this time with a cloud heavy beyond words to describe. Joseph G. Separk, the only son of his father, Joseph H. Separk, and the late May Gray Separk, died suddenly and tragically while on a hunting trip during the month of November with some friends and relatives. When his death was announced to the city of Gastonia and to the public at large a few hours later there was a sadness and a grief which filled the hearts of hundreds of his and his father's friends; a grief the like of which is seldom seen in our city and county and across the state. The expressions of sympathy and sorrow were multitudinous and beyond anything in the memory of Gastonia's large population. The funeral services of young Mr. Separk were largely attended on November 11th by thousands of his friends from near and far. His remains were laid tenderly away by the side of his late mother, Mrs. May Gray Separk, one of nature's noblewomen.

Joseph G. Separk after attending the Gastonia High School entered Duke University in the Fall of 1925 where he pursued his courses of study leading to the Bachelor

of Arts Degree. Due to an illness of typhoid fever he was delayed in his graduation until June 1930, when he was awarded his diploma. At the completion of his collegiate work Mr. Separk entered the offices of the Gray-Separk Mills where he labored for two full years. At the organization of The Separk Sales Company he became secretary and treasurer of the new organization, which position he retained until his death in 1940. During his short life Mr. Separk was interested in various church and civic enterprises, notably the Boy Scouts, DeMolay, college fraternity life, ATO and Pan-Hellenic Council, college teams of tennis, golf and basketball, amateur radio operation, and the Duke Alumni Association. He was a lifelong member of the Main Street Methodist Church of his home city.

Tonight we pause a little while to pay our tribute of love and respect to his memory and to express our appreciation of his life and work among us. To his illustrious father we as members of this association carry our frail words of sympathy and understanding in his bereavement and loss. As Duke Alumni, all of us say to the father in his heavy grief—"Heaven's blessings and The All Father's merciful compassion be upon thee now and forever." The sympathy of every Duke friend and alumnus goes out to Mr. Separk now and always in this colossal blow which has fallen.

Joseph G. Separk, friend of Duke and all Duke men everywhere, hail and farewell, farewell and hail.
Therefore—

First—We of the committee move that a copy of these resolutions be filed in the archives of our Alumni Association and be kept as a memorial of our brother, friend, officer and president, Joseph G. Separk.

Second—That a copy be given to the press for publication.

I N M E M O R I A M

Third—That a copy be sent to the bereaved and sorrowing father, the Hon. Joseph H. Separk, of Gastonia, and a lifelong and loyal friend of Duke University.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. C. Excell Rozzelle
C. D. Gray
James Mullen.

The above resolutions were adopted by the Gaston-Lincoln Chapter of the Duke University Alumni Association at its annual meeting March 8, 1941.

Rockville, Maryland
November 10, 1940

Mr. J. H. Separk
Gastonia, N. C.

My dear Bro. Separk:

We were sitting at the supper table tonight when your sad message was delivered to me. When these blows come we feel so helpless when we would so long to be with a friend, and to help in some way. But, alas, there is no way. We are cooped up in so narrow a life so far as the outward circumstance is concerned, and it seems that after all our love and friendship are the only big and free things we have. But, thank God, these do not die either by accident or the hand of time.

As I grow older I become more firmly established in my hope for a future life, and the revelation of the essential good that is in this world. We can not be mistaken about it. During my retirement I have longed to write at length about some of these more serious aspects of life, but I am also conscious of my limitations to fully express myself in written words and I hold back the impulse to try to put on paper what is in my mind and heart.

The theme that is uppermost in my mind is the story of the altar. We are saved by grace. Jesus was not only wise and good and true, but He was, and is, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. We become so

absorbed in His goodness that we come to think that His merit is made available to the world only through our goodness. But not so. He saves not by making us good primarily but by the sacrifice He made for our sins. This is the story of the altar. As this great Bible truth becomes more and more dominant in our thinking the more clearly we see the certainty of a glad reunion of the loves and fellowships we have had during our earthly journey. So I am thinking of dear Mrs. Separk, and now that splendid young man, Joe. As I write about him tonight you are feeling the utter loneliness of your life. Life has toppled in on you. So it seems I know. But I pray that this dream will pass away from you, and that rather you may see the Heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending. This is not easy when your pillow is a stone, but the new day will dawn. So set up your altar, and renew your covenant with God.

Dear Joe, the last time I saw him he seemed so virile and worth while. I saw that he was looking out upon the difficult problems of our times, and I could see that he was grasping the real significance of them. I thought surely that he would have a great career. I have no doubt but that his going has a good reason somewhere in God's great universe, but I do not pretend to see it now. Yet the miracle of faith bids us wait and go on to see the end in God's good time. Early this summer I went out very near the great divide. I bundled off to the Hospital not knowing whether I would get back or not. I went out into a strange world through a spinal anesthetic. But I was not afraid. The Doctor said what splendid nerve, but it was not nerve, it was trust in God. I seem to have recovered completely at present, but I know that the calendar is against me so I strive to be ready.

Now, my dear friend, I have found my pen running on because I am feeling that I wanted to chat with you in these dark and lonely days. I know that God will sustain. You do not know how much of pride and pleasure I take

I N M E M O R I A M

in all the good that comes to you, and how deeply I feel when sorrow and loss comes. I will not hold you longer. Thank you for letting me know in a personal way. It seems to speak of that which I hold most dear—your friendship.

Sincerely,

F. J. Prettyman.

While highly personal and intimate, I, nevertheless, have felt constrained to publish the above letter from a devoted friend and sympathizer.

MAIN STREET METHODIST CHURCH
GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA

November 17, 1940

Hon. Joseph H. Separk
Gastonia, N. C.

Dear Mr. Separk:

We of the Men's Class of the Main Street Methodist Church who have looked to you during the past years for moral and spiritual instruction in our Class want you to know now and always how deeply our sympathy goes out to you in this recent tragedy that has come to you. Our tongues and our pens are utterly incapable of telling you our love and admiration and how sorely we are grieved at the distressing loss of your well beloved son. There is not a man among us whose heart does not ache with yours in Joe's going away. We have prayed to our good Father above that He will sustain and support you in your heavy bereavement, and we have besought Him to make the burden light and the way before you one of comfort and courageous resignation.

You have a great multitude of friends and supporters always, but especially now that you are so tragically smitten, and all of them want you to realize how much your sorrow is theirs today. So we of the Men's Class, along with hundreds of others of your interested friends, desire you to know again how sympathetic we are in this day of your adversity and loss.

J O S E P H G R A Y S E P A R K

God bless and keep you and bring you back to our Class strong and brave.

Very sincerely and prayerfully,
A. J. Kirby, Jr.
Chas. A. Barkley
S. W. Gardner

Committee.

GASTONIA ROTARY CLUB
GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA
November 20, 1940

Mr. J. H. Separk,
Gastonia, N. C.
Dear Fellow Rotarian:

We, the members of the Gastonia Rotary Club, extend to you our deep and heartfelt sympathy in the loss of your son. During your lonely hours, may you be conscious of our sincere interest and sharing of your sadness. May you be ever conscious of the uplifting and strengthening power of the Divine Comforter, our best Friend in our times of need.

Cordially and Sincerely yours,
Phil P. Jackson, Secretary,
Gastonia Rotary Club.

Short Sketch of the Life of Joseph Gray Separk

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Joseph Gray Separk was born in Charleston, South Carolina, November 11, 1908. Orphaned while yet in his early babyhood, he came through adoption into our lives and hearts on February 1, 1911, as Joseph Gray Separk. Tenderly and lovingly his mother cared for his every physical, mental, and spiritual need. He had his share of those various child diseases as he was coming through the tender years of his life, but through them all he had the gentle and skillful nursing of a mother whose devotion and affection grew with the months and years.

His father found great joy in seeing to it that Joe's material needs were at all times provided, and, while there were available for him pleasures, comforts and even luxuries, there was never at anytime the desire, or even tendency, towards extravagance either in will or practice. It was noticeable in his grammar school and high school days that he declined, save in the severest weather, ever to be driven to school in our auto.

Though never inclined to be effusive or demonstrative, he was ever wont to fully reciprocate the love and devotion of Mom and Dad.

EARLY SCHOOLING

Great was the thrill of satisfaction that came to mother and father when the day arrived for Joe's entering the Gastonia Graded School, this in the fall of 1915. He often spoke of his first class room teacher, who made a great impression upon him, and he retained for her and for all of his teachers, principals, superintendents, and classmates great affection through the years. With books and study assignments he easily found time to mix and mingle fully

in the various school activities of his day. To us came great joy never to be forgotten when at the commencement of 1925 we witnessed his graduation and the presentation of his high school diploma.

COLLEGE DAYS

It was highly pleasing to his Mom and Dad that Joe selected Dad's alma mater, Trinity College—Duke University—as the college of his choice. In the fall of 1925 he entered the freshman class and selected the course that led to the A.B. Degree. He was happy in his college life. There he came in contact with some of the finest young men of this and other commonwealths throughout the nation. In his sophomore year he was initiated a member of the ATO, one of the finest national Greek letter fraternities of the day.

During the late fall of 1926, Joe suffered a serious attack of pneumonia and lost the greater part of the year so that his graduation came in 1930 instead of with the class of 1929 with which he had entered. One of the happiest days in the life of mother and father was that June day when we saw our devoted son receive his diploma.

Greatly had we missed his association during his college years, but we found consolation in the knowledge that we were giving him an equipment that would greatly assist him in his life's work and in meeting the problems that would confront him in this complex age. Our great reward was that at no time during those college years did he bring to us the least disappointment, but rather he remained firm and constant in his devotion to Mom and Dad and to those high principles of life to which he had committed himself in his earlier years. These principles found expression in his rigid adherence to truth, honesty, and fairness and just dealings with his fellowmen.

In his college days he was fond of all athletic sports, but the ones in which he participated were those of golf and tennis. For one season he was manager of the basketball

team and was a member for two years of the golf team and its assistant manager. His fraternity life was congenial in all respects, but his associations were at all times as pleasant with the non-fraternity men as with those of the fraternities. During his junior year he was Vice-President of the Pan-Hellenic Council. In *The Chanticleer* he was characterized in the line "The style is the man himself."

HIS WORK

Shortly after Joe's graduation he entered the office of the Gray-Separk Mills and remained there and with affiliated companies the next few years. On the organization of the Separk Sales Company in 1934, he was elected secretary and treasurer and one of the directors. These positions he held until the day of his death. In November 1936, Joe's father, J. H. Separk, was elected a member of the North Carolina State Senate and remained a member until November 1940. The Session of 1937 lasted nearly three months and the Session of 1939 was of about the same length. During all this time upon Joe rested the entire responsibility of running The Separk Sales Company. These duties he performed in a highly successful way, and it was very heartening to his Dad that there was never from him a word of complaint because of these added duties.

It was in the latter part of 1935 and early 1936 that the data for the book, "Gastonia and Gaston County, Past, Present and Future," was compiled. Much of this work was done by Joe, who labored long and patiently in securing facts and data and in checking through masses of details. Much of the data was likewise edited by him. At the date of his death we were planning a new line of business supplementary to our regular line. In addition to his work with The Separk Sales Company this new business was to be managed entirely by Joe, but his untimely death prevented this.

From the spring of 1936 he was a licensed amateur radio operator. He had a well equipped short wave radio



JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

At the age of three.
Taken in the Fall of 1912.



JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

At the age of eight years.

Taken in the year 1916.

set, the operation of which was with him a very pleasant pastime. Indeed, it might be said to have been one of his chief hobbies. Out of his radio contacts with fellow operators he received message cards from many states and cities throughout the United States and from many foreign countries. The exchange of these message cards was quite a part of his radio hobby.

He was a great lover of books and found many evenings of pleasure in his library. While he was fond of reading much of the best poetry of the past and present and a great many scientific works, his greatest fondness was for history and biography.

In his earlier years he gave much time to camping, swimming, and scouting and through these activities he became a great lover of the out-of-doors. In his after-college years he found most of his physical recreation in hunting and swimming and golf. For several years he held membership in the Gastonia Golf Club and in the Gaston Country Club.

AS SON

No mother nor father could hope for greater affection than he had for us through his years. He was as obedient in the smaller matters of life as he was in those of high import and concern. His solicitude for both of us was as constant as it was sincere, a characteristic of his that was as apparent to the casual acquaintance as to those of the inner circle. His joys were our joys and our joys were his.

AS FRIEND

To him it was not given to have the companionship of brothers and sisters, as he had none, but he did have for enjoyment and profit the companionship of the children of family connections and of friendly neighbors. The friendships thus formed in the days of early childhood remained constant and abiding to the end.

Those who knew him most intimately are those who can best appraise the quality of his friendship and the degree of its constancy. The hours that he spent with his real

friends he often spoke of as among the choicest hours of his life and no one thing in this life was dearer to him than constant and unalloyed friendship and friendliness.

He often spoke to me of his friends and for them he ever coveted the very best that life could offer. He found in his real friends qualities and characteristics that made it easy for him to love them.

A GIFT TO DUKE UNIVERSITY AS A MEMORIAL TO
JOSEPH GRAY SEPAK OF THE CLASS OF 1930

Under date of June 24, 1941, the father addressed a letter to Dr. Robert L. Flowers, President of Duke University, in substance as follows:

There hangs on the East wall of my large reception hall a beautiful hand-woven tapestry, size 9' 0" wide 10' 0" high, subject, Lorenzo de Medici Il Magnifico, said tapestry was hand-woven by the Edgewater Tapestry Looms in 1921.

I feel that this tapestry would be a very worthwhile addition to either the Art Museum or the main Library of Duke University. I have felt that I would like to donate this tapestry to Duke University as a memorial to my late devoted son, Joseph Gray Separk, of the Class of 1930. I am sure that you must know that after my late devoted wife, he was dearer to me than my own life and dearer than all else in life and I feel that the carrying out of this plan would forever remain in my mind as a beautiful tribute to his memory.

This memorial gift was accepted by Duke University and the tapestry now hangs on the wall of the main library.

Short Sketch of the Activities of the Late Joseph Gray Separk

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE YEARS

Entered the Gastonia Graded Schools in 1915 at the age of seven, and graduated at the High School in May 1925.

Entered Duke University in the Fall of 1925, and completed his four years work in 1929 and was awarded the A.B. Degree in June, 1930. (Would have received degree in June 1929 but for the fact that he lost one-half year as the result of typhoid fever in his second year.)

Was an active member of the ATO Fraternity at Duke and for one year was Vice-President of the Pan-Hellenic Council.

Took an active part in all college activities. His major sports were basketball, golf and tennis. Was a member of the golf team in his sophomore year. In his sophomore year he was also Assistant Business Manager of the basketball team at Duke.

Under Activities in the Duke University *Chanticleer* of 1930 in the list of the Senior Class appears the following:

JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

ATO

Gastonia, North Carolina

Assistant Basketball Manager (1); Golf Team
(3); Vice-President Pan-Hellenic Council (3).

"The style is the man himself."

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Joined Main Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of Gastonia at the early age of eight, having already joined the Sunday School two years previous to this. Through-

out his years he retained those active connections and for two years was a member of the Junior Board of Stewards of the Church. He had the highest possible regard for each and every minister who served this church throughout his years.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

At the annual meeting of the Gaston-Lincoln Duke University Alumni Association in 1939 he was elected president of the association. At the date of his untimely death in November, 1940, he had perfected all arrangements for holding the annual meeting and banquet of the association in the latter part of November. As a mark of respect to him and in sympathy for his father the association postponed this meeting until the spring of 1941.

HIS BUSINESS

After finishing college he was in the office staff of the Gray-Separk Mills for two years. In 1934 The Separk Sales Company was organized with Joseph Gray Separk as one of the incorporators. At the original organization meeting of this corporation he was elected a director and secretary and treasurer, which positions he held until the date of his death. During the Sessions of the General Assembly of 1937 and 1939 while his father was in the State Senate the sole responsibility and work of The Separk Sales Company devolved upon Joe.

During the fall of 1935 and 1936 he assisted his father in compiling the data for the publication, "Gastonia and Gaston County, Past, Present, and Future," and he likewise did much of the editing of that volume.

In his graded school and high school years he devoted much time to various school activities, but his chief athletic activities were in basketball and golf. In his senior year he managed the high school basketball team. During his senior year he was an active member of the Hi-Y Club, in the objectives and work of which he was vitally interested. For several years he was an active member of the DeMolays



JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

From a photograph taken in the beginning of his freshman
year at Trinity College, Duke University, 1925.

and served for two years as its treasurer. In 1924 and 1925 he received his letter in basketball and for literary work done in connection with the high school publication.

With him both as a recreation and a hobby was his work as an amateur radio operator. In 1936 he received his operator's license. He erected and operated a well equipped radio set and with this he contacted many points in America and various cities throughout the world. He amassed a great collection of radio exchange cards and these became a vital part of his souvenir equipment.

My Final Tribute

To you, my son Joe, dear and devoted to me and to your devoted mother in life and in that realm in which there is no death, dear and precious in memory.

You were to me through well nigh thirty years all that a father could hope for in a son and all that a mother could hope for in a son. As a child you were ever obedient to your Mom and to your Dad. No physical punishment was ever meted out to you for you never gave us cause. If, out of the abundance of our love and devotion for you, we were considered indulgent parents, it was because of your great devotion for us and of the great concern which you had at all times for our welfare.

Your school years from the primary grades on through grammar school and high school years brought to us ever increasing joy and satisfaction, and this continued on through your four college years. This was true because neither pressure nor moral suasion was ever necessary in your case.

I recall the many trips which I made to Duke during your college years. The cordiality of our greeting was always mutual in a high degree. I recall the happiness that came to me in finding you always in ever increasing contentment. If you found your work hard at times, or if you had problems difficult of solution, you did not utter complaint.

I can never forget the thrill of joy that came to your Mom and to myself when the day and hour of your graduation arrived. We felt that we had made it possible for you to forge another link in your life's chain.

Your after-college years are fresh in my memory and the happiest of these were when you and I were partners and pals in our business years. There were days and weeks and months when business was far from active, but you always encouraged me with a faith in a brighter tomorrow.



JOSEPH GRAY SEPARK

From a kodak picture taken in July, 1940.

In those many months of 1937 and 1939 when I was in the State Senate and the entire load of our business devolved upon you, there was naught of complaint nor dissatisfaction on your part, and for that I pay you high tribute. In those months and years that are now forever in the past I leaned far more upon you and your judgment than you could possibly realize and far more, indeed, than I could myself realize.

When the final summons came and our devoted wife and mother left us you showed a bravery and a courage that stamped you a man of great strength and character. I knew then as I now know that it was your deep concern for me and the firmness of your resolution to keep true to the memory of your precious Mom that helped you to bear that crushing blow.

Those who loved your Mom and those who loved you have been mighty good to me through these days and months, they have helped me to carry my double load of anguish. This double load I bear because of what each one of you were and because of what each of you continue to be to me in memory.

There is no day nor hour in which I do not carry you in my mind and heart. Your face is ever before me. The very sound of your voice is ever present in my memory, and the sweetness of your character continues a benediction to me. I never stand before the men of my Sunday school class that I do not look at the chair which you occupied from Sunday to Sunday and I always utter the silent prayer, "Lord, keep me true to his memory and to the memory of his devoted Mom."

And so I say to you, the son of my love and devotion, Farewell, and with assurance doubly sure that no one in this life can ever take your place in my life and affection.



GENERAL

MAIN STREET METHODIST CHURCH
GASTONIA, N. C.

To Our Friend and Brother, J. H. Separk

Dear Brother Separk:

Among the changing vicissitudes of this earthly life, bringing both blessings and adversities, both joy and sorrow, there come occasions when mere words, whether spoken with friendly fervor, or written in cold type on paper for the sake of record, fail woefully to convey, in any measure whatsoever, the real feeling and emotion which they are intended to convey.

In this feeble attempt, therefore, to express to you the deep sympathy which each and every member of this board genuinely feels, we hope that through the veil of mere words you will, with the eyes of the spirit, be able to see to a sufficient depth to plumb the unfathomable deeps of our brotherly affection and sincere fellow-feeling.

The loss of your life companion, coming with such unexpected suddenness, was a blow which no man could stand up under except he had within him the true spirit of Christian fortitude and submissiveness to the Divine Will, which "some time, some time, we'll understand."

In the passing of May Gray Separk to the better life, not only Main Street Church and her home community, but the entire connection suffered just as great a loss and bereavement as did her loving family. She was indeed a veritable pillar of the church, to whom all looked for wise guidance and friendly assistance. Her life, through all its length, was a shining example of true benevolence and worthy service to the Master and His cause.

Again you were called upon to bear a heavy load in the untimely passing of the son whose life showed so much promise of future joy to you, and again we found mere words were as "a tinkling cymbal and sounding brass"

when we tried to give expression to our feeling of sympathy and condolence. It may have seemed that we were negligent in making such expression, but we believe that you knew and felt in your heart that not only members of this board, but all your friends in Main Street Church and over the entire State held toward you the feelings which they were at a loss to put in words or otherwise convey.

This letter is indeed but a token, a little screed of friendship and brotherly love, which we offer in the hope that you can give it your own interpretation in much fuller measure than any one of us could possibly do.

Fraternally yours,

Board of Stewards of Main Street
Methodist Church, Gastonia, N. C.

Easter Flowers

The flowers are placed in the church today as a tribute of love to the memory of May Gray Separk by her devoted sisters and brothers, J. Lander Gray*, Ethel G. Barkley, George A. Gray, Charles D. Gray, Blanche G. Hamner, Maude G. Efird and Myrtle G. Legare.

The above taken from the bulletin of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina, Easter Sunday, April 13, 1941.

The flowers are placed in the church today as a tribute of love to the memory of wife and son, Mrs. Joseph H. Separk and Joseph Gray Separk, by husband and father, Joseph H. Separk.

The above taken from the bulletin of Main Street Methodist Church, Gastonia, North Carolina, Easter Sunday, April 5, 1942.

* Deceased since above was written.

Memories

I shall never forget those days and hours when my beloved wife lay so still and beautiful under a vast canopy of God's beautiful flowers in what had been our living room and just beside the grand piano whose music had been so dear to her in life. Nor can I forget the vast concourse of friends and loved ones from every walk of life who came to look for the last time upon the face of one whose voice in this life had been forever hushed.

Little did I think that in so short a while I was to pass through another Gethsemane. In just one hundred and one days my beloved son lay still and beautiful in death in that selfsame spot surrounded by a great array of beautiful flowers and by friends and loved ones in great numbers. Never can I forget that scene, nor can I forget the thoughts of mind and the anguish of soul. He was so young and hopeful. I felt then as I feel now that it were far better that I should be taken and that he should be left. But God knows best and it is not for mortals to question His wisdom, nor doubt His justice.

Two Memorable Events

In our years we had forty anniversaries of our wedding day, but those that will live longest in memory were the twenty-fifth, the Silver Anniversary, and the fortieth. The first of these found us in happiness and health, and in age just past the meridian point of life. The second, our fortieth, found us past three score years still in happiness and in apparent health.

A highly satisfying recollection came to me on our Fortieth Anniversary. I reflected that not a single anniversary had passed in those forty years on which I had failed to remember her with some gift, a token of my continuing thought and abiding love. I reflected, too, that I had not let pass a single anniversary of the date of her birth without a gift as a token of my continuing thought and abiding love.

The following two letters I addressed to her, the one on our Twenty-fifth Anniversary and the other on the Fortieth:

May 23, 1925

My dear—

They say that young men see visions but that old men dream dreams. There is infinite need of the vision and dreams are not restricted to those who have grown old. It is worth while to dream, to think back and ponder the happenings of the past.

I am having a dream this forenoon, and it is fitting that I should. There come to mind thick and fast scenes and happenings and experiences throughout a quarter of a century, running to an almost infinite number. Today marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the married life of a man and a woman. The end of each of these twenty-five years stands as a milepost in the life of twain made one. A retrospect from some of these mileposts may in a measure furnish little of the eventful, but some of these mileposts are

anchored in my mind in strength excelling that of Gibraltar. Naught that earth can give could furnish the least inducement to cause forgetfulness of some of those mileposts and of those happenings which are now of hallowed memory. I am thinking of the early beginnings of our married life.

On Wednesday, May twenty-third, in the year of our Lord one thousand, nine hundred, the solemn words were spoken which made us two one. I was then in the fullest measure of strength and vigor, but you, through illness lacked much of your girlhood health and strength. A kind Providence lent a sustaining hand and brought back by degrees into your cheeks the bloom of health. But in less than a year there came to me a serious illness of three long months. Throughout that illness no trained nurse ministered unto me, but you occupied this role, singly and alone. Others despaired, but you—never! You were constantly with me in ministration, in love, and in prayer, and because of you more than because of all other human agencies combined, I lived and am permitted to tell the story. When up from that serious illness life had been continued for me, but not health and vigor. How my mind at the moment dwells upon the thought of your patience, your wifely care and your ministrations through the twelve months or more—all given lovingly—that to my cheeks might come again the color due my age and to my body once again strength and power! These came because of you, and happiness is mine at the moment in great measure in making this acknowledgment.

The years immediately following this were meager years so far as this world's goods be concerned. My meager income did not permit me to furnish you in full measure even the stern necessities of life, there were no luxuries, there could be none. Neither was there any whining or repining because of the absence of those things which ought to have been your due. But there was a great compensation that came out of it all, and that compensation lay in the unconscious revealing to me of both your soul and your spirit.

I cannot possibly trace all the intervening years that

have been since then to now. Out of the heroism and the sacrifices and the struggles of those early days we have been permitted to work up by united efforts into lines of greater comforts and ease, and while we have grown not old, but somewhat older in years and in affection and in love, I hope that neither your mind nor my mind will ever grow so dim as to bring forgetfulness of those earlier days.

In this, my retrospective dream, I am tracing at this moment that which has meant after all, perhaps, most to your life and to my life and to our lives taken together, and that is—God's gift to us of our son, Joe. As we sat last evening in the High School Auditorium and saw Joe stand and heard him on the platform, I am sure that you spiritually joined me in tracing his life from babyhood on to young childhood, and from the beginning of his school days to his completion of the High School course. It seems all so short a period from babyhood to young manhood. There were days in his childhood when illness came and there was naught of laughter nor light-heartedness, but there was anxiety, struggle, hope and prayer. Especially was this true at two periods of very severe illness, but God was good to us and held his life for us, for himself, and let us hope for others. We should be very happy in the thought that Joe has given us no care, no anxiety because of his conduct or demeanor. Let us continue joined in the hope that the quality of your training may abide with him in all its staying force and power as he enters upon and continues in another realm of life, college life.

There will come to you with this note of appreciation a token commemorative of our Silver Anniversary, but I hope that you may not think of this token in the light of its intrinsic worth, nor yet in the light of it as representative of more than the merest atom of my heart's love and affection. So here's to hope that you may find much of real joy and happiness on this, our Silver Anniversary, and here's to hope that we may continue hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, moving forward to that

other anniversary marking the fiftieth milepost of married life. We may not reach our Golden Anniversary, but we can, I trust, live together in sweet comradeship and in company with our dear son for many, many years to come.

In love, devotion and constancy

Your husband,

J. H. Separk.

Mrs. J. H. Separk

Gastonia, N. C.

May 23, 1940

My dear—

Forty years have passed since you took me for better or for worse. There have been sunshine and shadows, there have been fat years and lean, but love and companionship have been constant and abiding and so will they be through the years. May health and good cheer be yours on through the years that are yet to be. A devoted son joins me in wishing this.

Devotedly,

Your husband,

J. H. Separk.

Mrs. J. H. Separk

Gastonia, N. C.

Memories

There stands in its easel on his mother's writing desk the poem which Joe gave to his beloved mother Christmas of 1930, the year of his graduation, and I almost daily read those beautiful words.

There is a house made all of gold,

The house where Mother lives ;

It isn't really gold, you know,

And yet her love has made it so.

For Mother love cannot grow cold,

Her tender memory ever gives

A loving, happy, golden glow,

About the house where Mother lives.

I recall how often she read those words and how deeply she appreciated that simple gift. Those words, the sentiment of his heart, meant far more to her than gold or precious gems.

I recall that after she left us he almost nightly, just before retiring, looked upon that poem and read its hallowed words. I know now the vastness of the void he felt as he read those words. I tried as best I might to take her place in his life, but that, I realize, I could never do, nor could another in this life.

Memories

Among the pleasant memories reaching into the past is the following telegram to our devoted son:

JOSEPH G. SEARK
DORMITORY 2
DUKE UNIVERSITY
DURHAM, N. C.

Gastonia, N. C.
November 11, 1929

WE BOTH CONGRATULATE YOU HEARTILY ON YOUR ARRIVAL AT MANHOODS HOUR STOP THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE TODAY AND YESTERDAY IS THE FACT THAT NOW AND HENCEFORTH BY THE LAWS OF COMMONWEALTH AND NATION YOU CAN SIGN AND ACT AS A LEGAL CITIZEN STOP THAT YOU WILL ACT IN THE FULLEST MEASURE OF APPRECIATION OF CITIZENSHIP IN ALL MATTERS CONFERRING RIGHTS AND IN DISCHARGING DUTIES WE NEED NO WHIT OF ASSURANCE BEYOND THAT WHICH YOU HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED IN EVERY WALK IN AND IN EVERY ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE STOP WE REJOICE WITH YOU THAT YOU HAVE COME TO THE AGE OF TWENTY ONE WITH A STRENGTH AND VIGOR OF MIND AND BODY AND WITH A

RESOLUTE DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE AND
WITH A FAITH IN SELF AND IN ALL THESE WE
FIND A CONTENTMENT AND A HAPPINESS AND
SO OUR REJOICING WITH YOU IS FULL MEASURED.

MOTHER AND DAD

Our Four Homes

In our years we had four homes. The first three years of our married life, 1900-1903, our home was in the home of the father and mother of my late wife, George Alexander and Jennie Withers Gray. Those were years of great happiness and comfort. No daughter ever had a more devoted father and mother, and their attitude towards the son-in-law highly justified his unstinted love and affection throughout their lives and still abides in memory.

Our second home was at 209 West Second Avenue, the gift to my wife by her father. There we began housekeeping and that was our happy home for sixteen long years.

During the years from 1919 to May 1, 1921, our new home was under construction and during those years we enjoyed the hospitality of the home of F. D. Barkley and wife, the wife being the sister of my late wife.

On May 1, 1921, we moved into our new home, a picture of which appears in this volume. In that home, husband, wife and son spent twenty years of happy, devoted home life.

Throughout these twenty years there was ever open house. Thither came to us kith and kin, friends, and acquaintances throughout those years, nor did anyone ever come without a welcome. That home is no more and memory must take its place. Enshrined in that memory there shall ever be the name of each one whose friendship has remained genuine and constant.

An Appreciation

Hundreds of sympathetic friends, churches, civic and community groups have remembered us in these days, made very sad through the sudden death of our devoted wife and mother.

A great number have made personal calls or written or wired consoling words; a great number have sent beautiful designs of choicest flowers, the bits of God's beauty in the world of nature, which, in life, she loved so much; a great number have lent helping hands and willing hearts to the lessening of our grief. To all these we wish to express our deepest gratitude.

We shall ever hold in high and grateful memory every kindly deed and act of kin, and friends, and acquaintances.

Joseph H. and

Joseph G. Separk

Gastonia, N. C.

August 3, 1940

The above appeared in the *Gastonia Daily Gazette* issue of August 3, 1940.

An Appreciation

Another tragic blow has come to me in the death through accident of our devoted son, Joe. Hundreds of his friends and our friends have shown great sympathy for me in my deep sorrow. Hundreds have come in person to me to offer words of sympathy and consolation. Many letters and telegrams have come.

Scores and hundreds have sent beautiful flowers. All these must know of the deep waters through which I am passing. To all those who have felt for me and with me I wish to express my deep gratitude and appreciation.

I shall hold for all time in grateful memory each one who has remembered me in my grief.

Joseph H. Separk

Gastonia, N. C.

November 16, 1940

The above card of appreciation sent to sympathizing friends.



THE SEPARK HOME
Our home from 1921 to 1940.



A view of a corner section of home and garden.



A view of a rear section of the garden.

The Trivial Imperfections

When some one has been kind to me
His faults I never seem to see;
When friends my heavy need would share
I never see the clothes they wear,
I never stand in scorn to note
The necktie doesn't match the coat.

'Tis only in my moments proud
I think another's voice too loud,
Or criticize his choice of hats
And overcoats and shoes and spats,
And cite his trifling faults as though
They were important things to know.

'Tis only when I'm trouble-free
The flaws in others I can see,
Or think it smart to make a jest
Of one whose worth I haven't guessed;
But when I'm hurt and he is kind
To all things else I'm deaf and blind.

The little flaws at which we smile
And make so much of all the while
Are wisps of habit which conceal
The tenderness our griefs reveal.
When one stands helpless and afraid
Who cares how friendship comes arrayed?

—*Edgar Guest*

This was at the very core of my wife's philosophy of life.

“My Task”

To love someone more dearly every day,
To help a wandering child to find his way,
To ponder o'er a noble thought, and pray,
And smile when evening falls,
This is my task.

To follow truth as blind men long for light,
To do my best from dawn of day till night,
To keep my heart fit for His holy sight,
And answer when He calls,
This is my task.

—*Maude Louise Ray*

A poem very dear to my wife.

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down;
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown;
But oh, 'tis good to think of them,
When we are troubled sore!
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more!

More home-like seems the vast unknown
Since they have entered there;
To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare;
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore;
Whate'er betides, Thy love abides,
Our God, for evermore.

—*John White Chadwick.*

I will not doubt, though sorrows fall like rain,
And troubles swarm like bees about a hive;
I will believe the heights for which I strive
Are only reached by anguish and by pain;
And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses,
I yet shall see through my severest losses
The greater gain.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

God of the living, in whose eyes
Unveiled thy whole creation lies!
All souls are thine; we must not say
those are dead who pass away;
From this our world of flesh set free;
We know them living unto thee.

Released from earthly toil and strife,
With thee is hidden still their life;
Thine are their thoughts, their words,
their powers,
All thine, and yet most truly ours:
For well we know, where'er they be,
Our dead are living unto thee.

Not spilt like water on the ground,
Not wrapt in dreamless sleep profound,
Not wandering in unknown despair
Beyond thy voice, thine arm, thy care;
Not left to lie like fallen tree;
Not dead, but living unto thee.

—*John Ellerton.*

Separk Mausoleum

This building of imperishable granite and marble, erected out of the undying love and devotion of husband and father, holds all that remains of wife and son. The crypts that encase their precious bodies carry the following inscriptions:

Sacred to the Memory of May Gray
Devoted Wife of Joseph H. Separk
Born July 26, 1878 Died July 31, 1940

Devoted wife, mother, friend,
Consecrated to calls of duty,
Constant in loyalty, faithful
To home, church, community.

* * * *

"The land she loved gave her Her rest,
She gave the land she loved Her best."

* * * *

Sacred to the Memory of Joseph Gray
Devoted Son of Joseph H. and May Gray Separk
Born November 11, 1908 Died November 9, 1940

* * * *

The joy of mother's and father's hearts
For them he was constant in devotion and in love.

"Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved."

—Tennyson.



Separk Mausoleum erected in 1941.

Final Word

Out of my undying love for wife and son, the two persons who in life were dearer to me than life itself, I have edited this volume. Much of the material has been written by me and much has been contributed by societies and organizations with which wife and son were associated and by certain ones who were very dear to them in the days of their living.

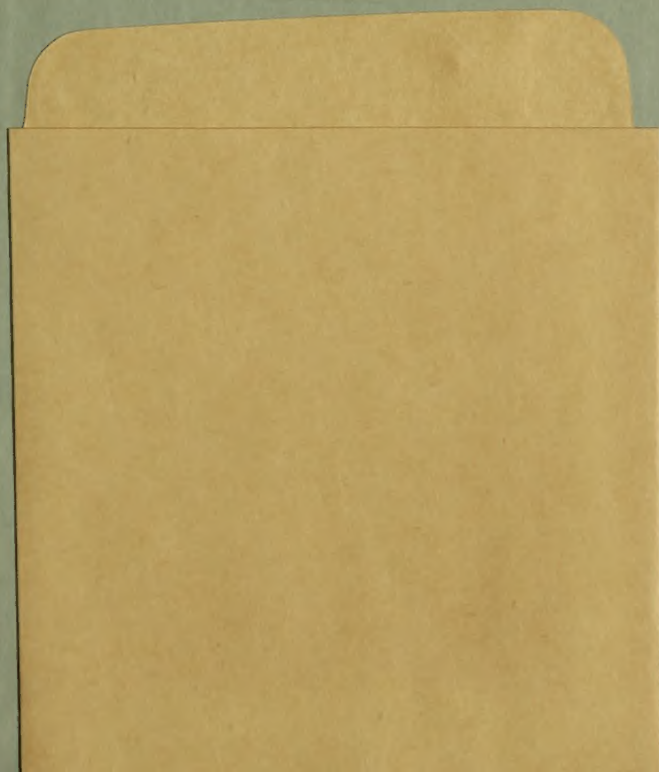
Though the filling of these pages has been a labor of love, it has been marked by many hours of extreme sadness. As I have thought and made the attempt to write, memories of experiences and associations have crowded in upon me and with them has come the hard realization that those experiences and associations can never be mine again.

As I now write there come to me other memories, memories of the outpouring of sympathy and love by the scores and hundreds of those who came to me in the days of my great anguish and sorrow through the loss of my devoted wife. Memories, also, of those who came again to help me bear the tragic blow of the loss of the son of my love and devotion. There, also, come to me memories of those who could not come in person, but who did let me feel the fine quality of their sympathy in letters, and in wires, and in the beautiful floral designs which they sent. Though I have sought in ways many my deep appreciation to express, I would now reaffirm my gratitude to all those who have felt for me and with me and who have continued to remember. I covet the continuance of the remembrance of all these.

I would that I might, as a further tribute to wife and son, publish all the telegrams and letters that came to me in my most tragic days, but I realize that that cannot be done. The few that appear in this volume fairly reflect the tenor of all. All these wires and letters are very dear to me and many of them I have read and reread times without number.

I am now thinking of that great English poet, Lord Tennyson, and of the days and years of the deep anguish of his mind and soul as, with finite mind, he dared to attempt to fathom the why of the sudden passing of his devoted friend, Hallam. To him life itself seemed to topple in all about him and for many years there could for him be no clarity of thinking. Finally the mists were lifted, darkness gave way to light, and he was able once more to say in his resignation, "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love, Whom we that have not seen Thy face, by faith and faith alone embrace, believing where we cannot prove."

It is not given to mortal man to lift the veil that separates the future from the now, nor am I sure that I would lift it if I could, but of one thing I am sure and that is that the future life means far more to my mind and spirit than once it did. Those who once walked with me and talked with me never again can be with me in the flesh, but, like as I through faith can and do know that my Redeemer liveth, so can I and do I know that they, too, live. I can and do know that their spirits are with me and that they, from that mysterious and unknown realm in God's Kingdom, challenge me to a high resolve to keep faith and to keep it undimmed on and on unto that Perfect Day. And so, though long be the nights and constant the loneliness of my life, I am resolved to get whatsoever of solace I may from my memories and from the consciousness of the ever presence of their spirits with me.



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